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# Manchester Quarterly



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LITERATURE AND ART.

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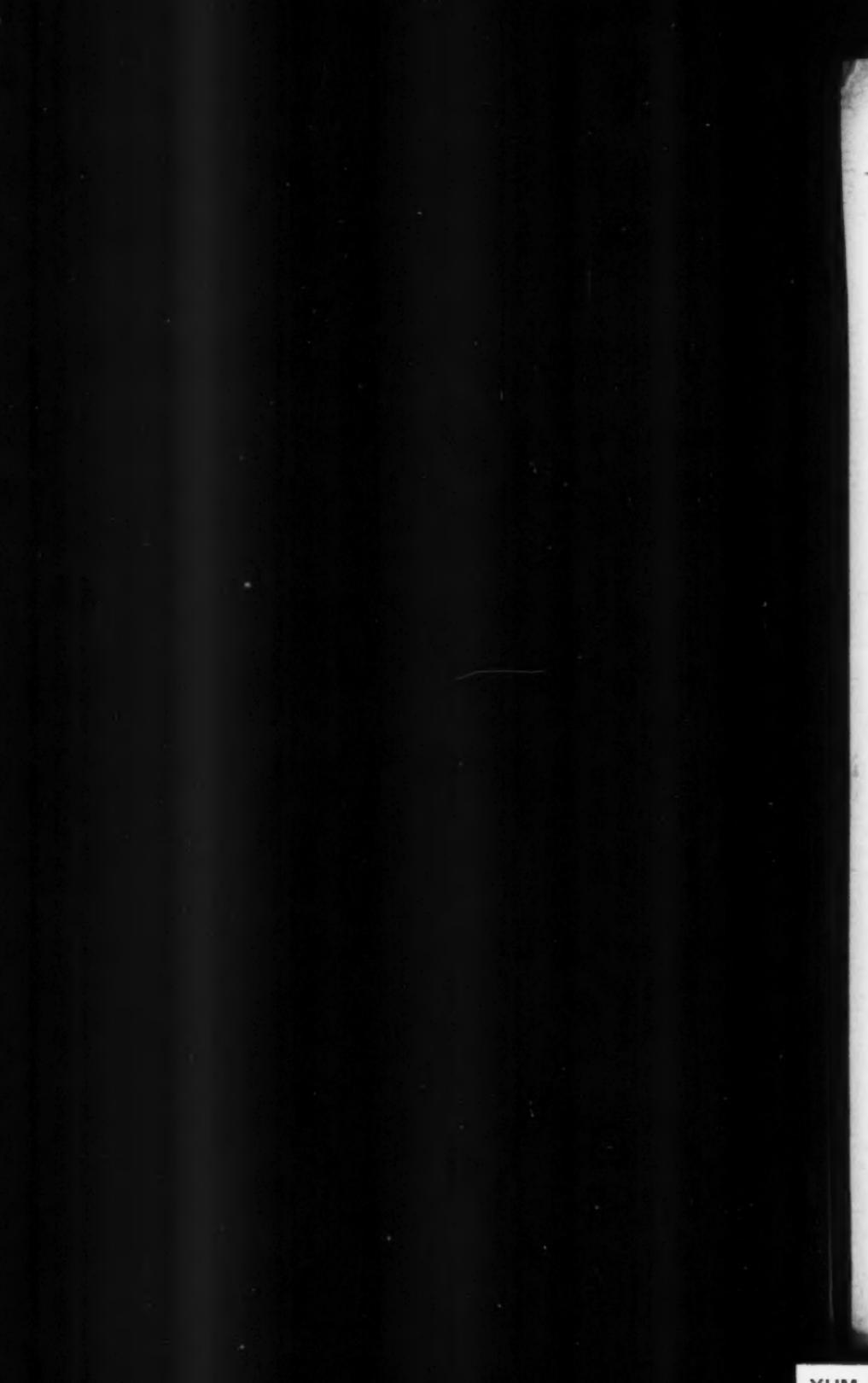
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2. To publish from time to time works illustrating or elucidating the literature, art, and history of the county.
3. To provide a place of meeting where persons interested in the furtherance of these objects can associate together.

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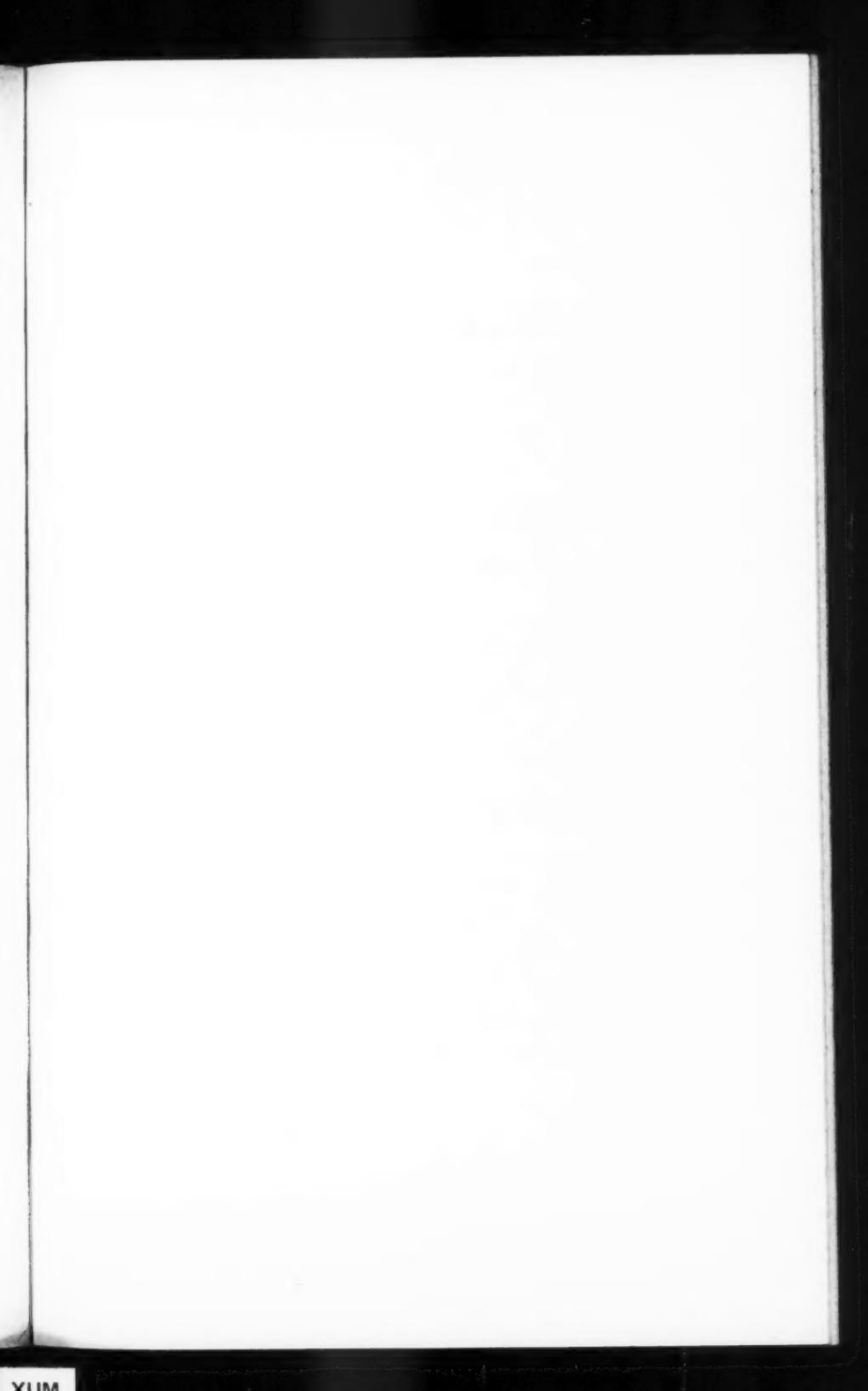
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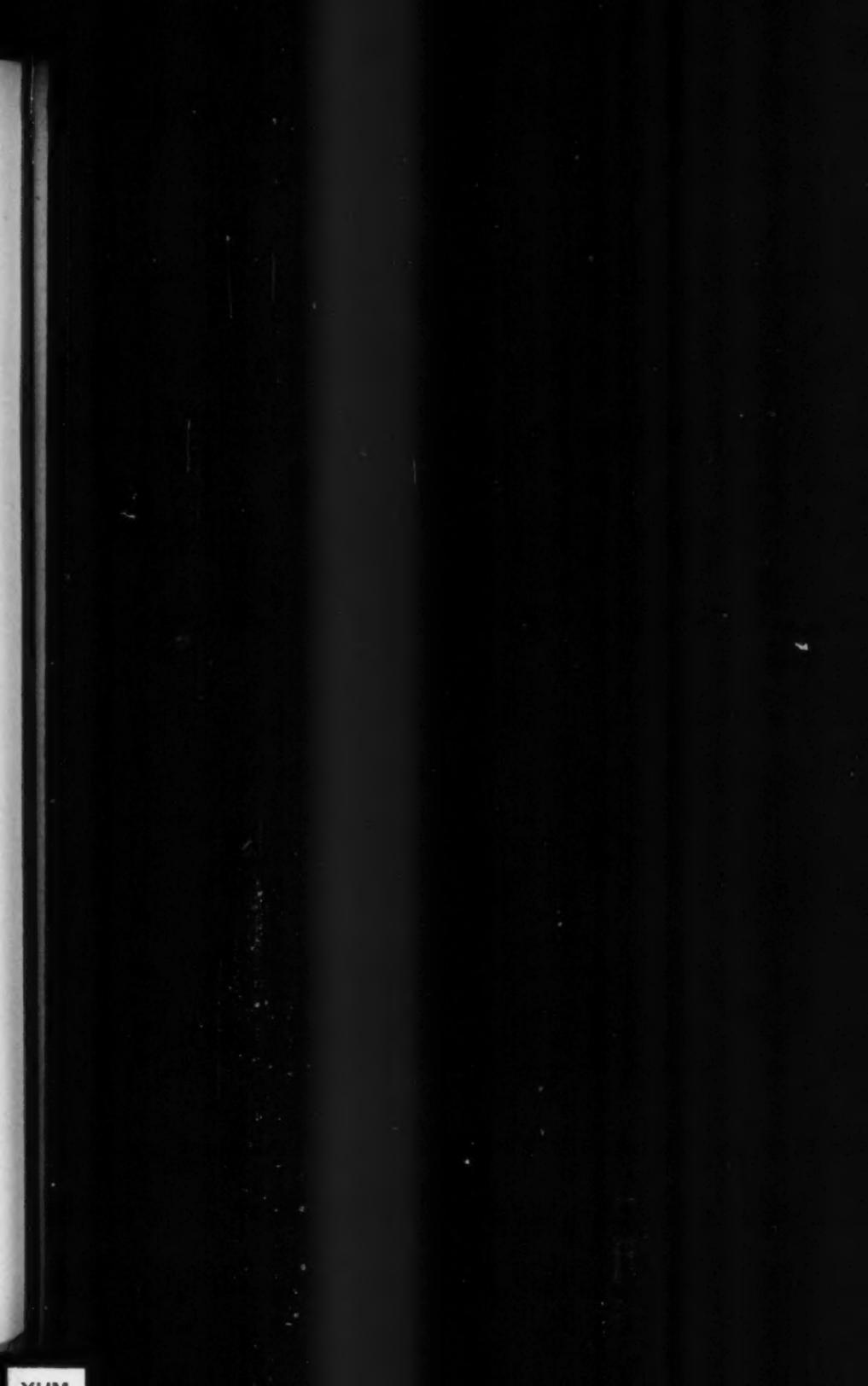
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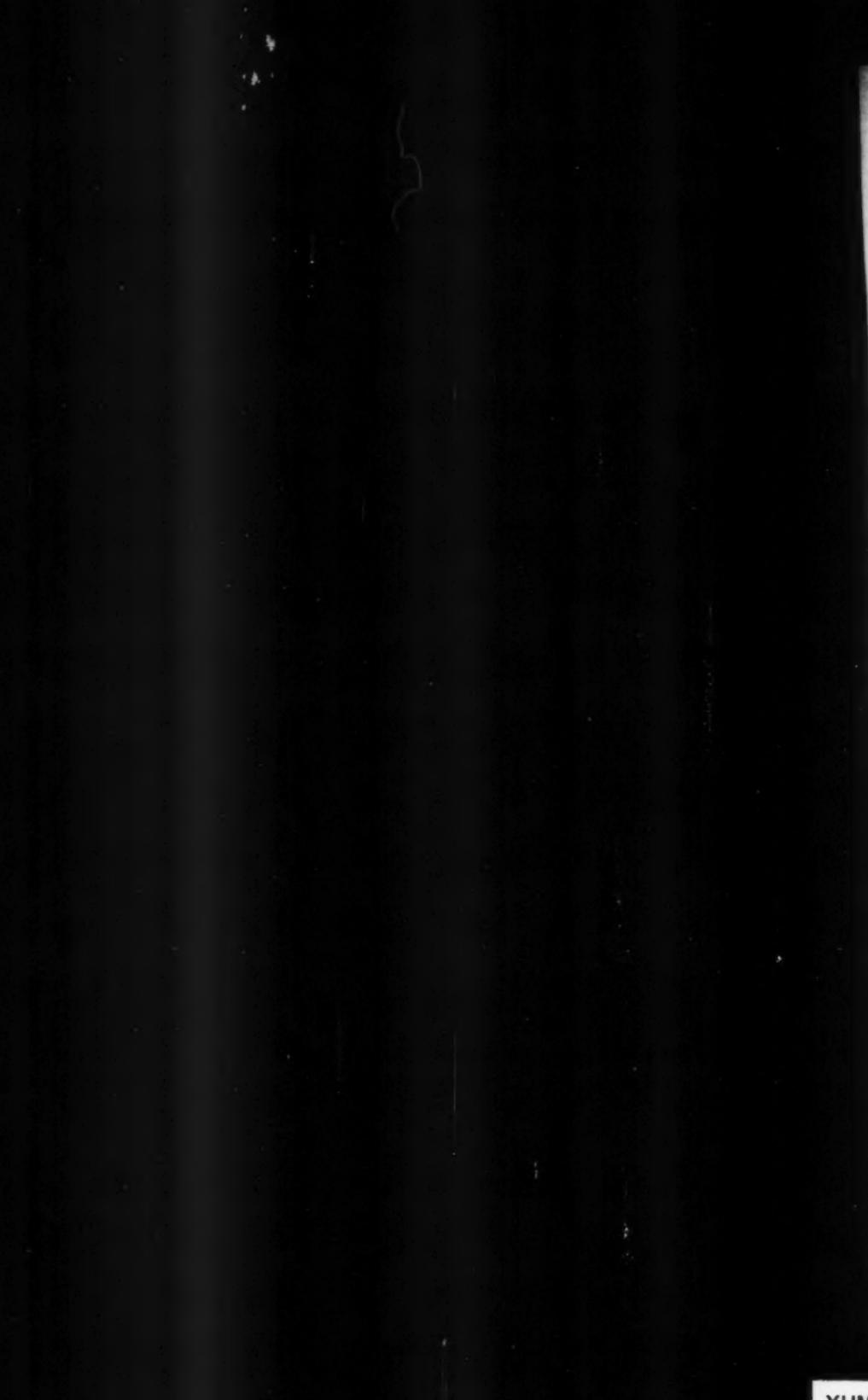


THE LEASOWES.

*From a Photograph by the Rev. F. Stergison.*







## WILLIAM SHENSTONE, LANDSCAPE GARDENER AND MAN OF LETTERS.

By ARTHUR W. FOX.

IT is no light task to estimate at its true worth the influence upon his age of an eighteenth century country gentleman, who spent much of his time and more of his fortune upon landscape gardening, while he aspired to be a poet of the first rank, no less than to play a prominent part in politics. Though some of his contemporaries were too kind to William Shenstone, others like the fastidious Horace Walpole and the retiring Thomas Gray unduly depreciated his real worth, thus insensibly affecting the judgment of posterity. The genteel critic dubbed him "the water-gruel bard": the scholarly poet has left behind in his letters more than one caustic comment upon his fellow-singer. Such ill-natured abuse was little deserved by one who was himself the kindest of men and who, though a fearless and discerning critic, was by no means blind to the excellences of others. It will be my object, so far as I am able, to depict an eighteenth century interior with its chief inhabitant, using the materials left in Shenstone's "Familiar Letters," which were not printed until some years after his death.

A few sentences will suffice to tell the uneventful story of his earlier days. William, grandson of William and son of Thomas Shenstone by Ann, eldest daughter of William Penn of Hagley, was born at the Leasowes on November 13th, 1714. The little estate, upon which he afterwards bestowed so much thought and money, lies in Hales Owen, then a detached district of Salop, but now included in Worcestershire. It was bought by the poet's

grandfather and was worth about £300 a year. It is pleasantly situated in a shallow valley well-wooded and watered by a pretty stream. From many points of view in the grounds, the venerable parish church—the mausoleum of the Vernons—can be seen, where the mortal remains of William Shenstone were laid to rest. He was educated first at a dame's school kept by one Sarah Lloyd, whose homely yet awful presence he has immortalised in his "Schoolmistress," in burlesqued yet admirable Spenserian stanzas. No less a critic than Dr. Johnson, who might have taught Horace Walpole more civility, much admired the little poem. It was written while its author was at Oxford to charm the University wits, first published in 1742, then in a fuller form but without the amusing index, in the first volume of Dodsley's "Collection" (1748). Of the dame herself he says:—

Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,  
Emblem right meet of decency does yield ;  
Her apron, dy'd in grain, as blue, I trowe,  
As is the hare-bell that adorns the field :  
And in her hand, for scepter, she does wield  
Tway birchen sprays ; with anxious fear entwin'd,  
With dark distrust, and sad repentance fill'd,  
And stedfast hate, and sharp affliction join'd,  
And fury uncontroul'd and chastisement unkind.

Once more he sings:—

A russet stole was o'er her shoulders thrown ;  
A russet kirtle fenc'd the nipping air ;  
'Twas simple russet, but it was her own ;  
'Twas her own country bred the flock so fair ;  
'Twas her own labour did the fleece prepare ;  
And, sooth to say, her pupils, rang'd around,  
Thro' pious awe, did term it passing rare ;  
~~For~~ they in gaping wonderment abound,  
And think, no doubt, she been the greatest wight on ground.

So his gentle humour plays lovingly around his first teacher, whose character and habits are set forth in life-

like and harmonious verse. Herein Shenstone uses the Spenserian stanza with greater skill than any (save James Thomson in his "Castle of Indolence") of the later bards who have endeavoured to imitate the master-poet.

From the painful care of Sarah Lloyd he passed on to Hales Owen Grammar School, where he acquired that deep love of books, which was destined to cheer him through the long loneliness of many a winter's night. In 1732 he was entered at Pembroke College in Oxford, where he may have stayed four years, making two or three of those friendships, which were the solace of his later life. Here, though he did not take a degree, he attained that fine knowledge and discriminating love of the Latin authors, which shows itself alike in his "Familiar Letters" and in his polished verse. Here too he gained that fluent if not always exact Latinity, which he employed to commemorate the visits of noteworthy friends to the Leasowes and for inscriptions upon some of his numerous garden-seats. Amongst these friends were Anthony and Thomas Whistler, and two country clergymen, Richard Jago and Richard Graves, the latter of whom penned a once famous satire upon the Methodists under the title of "The Spiritual Quixote." To these may be added the Countess of Luxborough, the two Littletons, Robert Dodsley and Joseph Spence.

After leaving Oxford Shenstone retired to the Leasowes, where he lived under the care of a guardian until 1745, when he entered upon the management of his "Farm," as he loved to call it in imitation of Horace. During the first years of his manhood he made more than one visit to London, where he had the privilege of seeing Cibber and Kitty Clive in "All's well that end's well." His account of this performance gives a clear glimpse into the theatre of his day. Of Cibber himself he says, "I think Cibber elicited from me as sincere a laugh as I can ever recollect. Nothing, sure, can be comparable to his representation of Parolles in his bully-character; except the

figure he makes as a shabby gentleman. In the first dress he is tawdry, as you may imagine: in the last, he wears a rusty black coat, a black stock, a black wig with a Ramillie, a pair of black gloves and a face!—which causes five minutes laughter." Such was the eighteenth century manager's conception of correctness of costume, in which, it must be confessed, he matched that of Shakespeare himself. On one of these visits to London with characteristic good sense Shenstone noted how dependent for their success the plays in the great city were upon their gorgeous scenery with the aid of star-performers, much as they are to-day, though the ideas of mounting differ widely. Nor did he shrink from commanding the acting of strolling players in comparison. "The truth is," he writes to a friend, "the chief advantage of plays in town lies entirely in the scenery. You seldom observe a set of strollers without one or two actors who are quite equal to their parts; and I really know of no good one at either of the two Theatres Royal, except Cibber, who rarely acts, and Mrs. Clive."

Sometimes our poet would go to "take the waters" at the cheerful city of Bath, where in his early days he had the reputation of being something of a beau. At this period of his life he busied himself in reading deeply and in writing verse. In his letters to his friends he criticises freely and usually with keen good sense the books which have occupied his attention. He also passes his judgment upon the poems of his intimates and seeks their judgment upon his own. He had a sensitive ear for rhythm and it is seldom that in this branch of the poetic art his verse falls short of even excellence. He says of himself, "I find my *ear* much more apt to take offence than most other people's." But he did not confine his censure to such matters; he shewed a nice discrimination in estimating the authors read, of whom he wrote chiefly to Mr. Jago and Mr. Graves. Of the "Dunciad," then thirteen years old, he writes:—"The Dunciad is, doubtless, Mr. Pope's

dotage,  $\tauοῦ \Deltaιος \hat{\epsilon}νύπνια$ ; flat in the whole, and including, with several tolerable lines, a *number* of weak, obscure, and even punning ones." More than he may have had doubts about the "Dunciad," but few would have dared to express them even to a literary friend.

Here it should be noted, that Shenstone set a high value upon his letters, which he would seem to have intended for ultimate publication. Often he would leave one written upon his table and wait for months before he thought it sufficiently polished to send to its destination. Hence he was much distressed when his letters to Mr. Whistler were destroyed after his friend's death. Sometimes in his remarks upon contemporary writers his discernment was at fault, as when he spoke of "the whole tedious character of Parson Adams." To Samuel Richardson he was less unjust: "Pamela," he says, "would have made one good volume; and I wonder the author, who has some *nice* natural strokes, should not have sense enough to see that." Again, when "Clarissa Harlowe" was two years old, he writes, "I saunter about my grounds, take snuff, and read Clarissa. This last part of my employment threatens to grow extremely *tedious*: not but that the author is a man of *genius* and nice *observation*; but he might be less *prolix*." More than one reader with a half-weary sigh, while highly appreciating Richardson's real *genius*, will echo Shenstone's just comment on his serious fault.

In like manner, when he read Edward Young's "Night Thoughts," he felt no small fatigue. After briefly describing an old aunt of his, who was a veritable prototype of Mrs. Nickleby, he continues, "She shall fetch a long-winded sigh with Doctor Young for a wager, though I see *his* suspiria are not yet finished. He has *relapsed* into 'Night the Fifth.' I take his case to be wind in great measure, and would advise him to take rhubarb in powder, with a little nutmeg grated amongst it, as I do." Truly he suggests a whimsical if efficient cure for the mournful

divine's poetic *afflatus*. When "laborious Carte" brought out his "History of England to 1654" and ruined its success by ascribing in his preface miraculous powers to the Pretender, Shenstone asked Mr. Jago, "What think you of Carte's History? as what of his narrative concerning the Pretender's touching for the King's Evil? I think one is not, however, to give up his book entirely; because with *all his superstition*, he may have several anecdotes one would like to read." Certainly this criticism implies no high value for scientific history, though it is not wholly unjust to the biographer of the Duke of Ormond. When Thomson's "Castle of Indolence" appeared in 1748, Shenstone read it with avidity, and has thus recorded his shrewd judgment on that delightful allegory. "Thomson's poem amused me greatly. I think his plan has faults; particularly, that he should have said nothing of the diseases attending laziness in his *first Canto*, but reserved them to strike us *more affectingly* in the last; but on the whole, who would have thought that Thomson could so well have imitated a poem remarkable for simplicity both of sentiment and phrase?" So might a modern critic pronounce with no less justice on Shenstone's "Schoolmistress."

Having thus given a taste of our poet's quality as a critic and joined together for convenience opinions spread over a number of years, I may fitly proceed to describe his life as a country gentleman and man of letters. In appearance he was tall and stout with heavy features and wearing his own gray hair as negligently as he clothed his person in his later years. So early as 1741 he presents a striking picture of his own character, as he saw himself. "I have in my temper," he says, "some rakishness, but it is checked by want of spirits; some solidity, but it is softened by vanity; some esteem of learning, but it is broke in upon by laziness, imagination, and want of memory &c. I could reckon up twenty things throughout my whole circumstances wherein I am thus tantalised."

He was indeed a curious compound of indolence and ambition, who was naturally too diffident to make that figure in the outside world which he coveted so eagerly. Hence to the end, though fond of the company of friends, he remained a somewhat lonely man. With keen discernment he remarks in one of his letters, "An idle person should have a large acquaintance." It was just this defect of his joined to a certain diffidence, which prevented him from winning the literary and political honours, to which he felt that his mental gifts entitled him. Yet he yearned for popularity in the world of letters, as may be seen after his publication of a small volume of poems at Oxford, which he afterwards suppressed. He besought his friend, Mr. Graves, to tell him, if he could, how far that first effort had won the admiration of the best judges in the University.

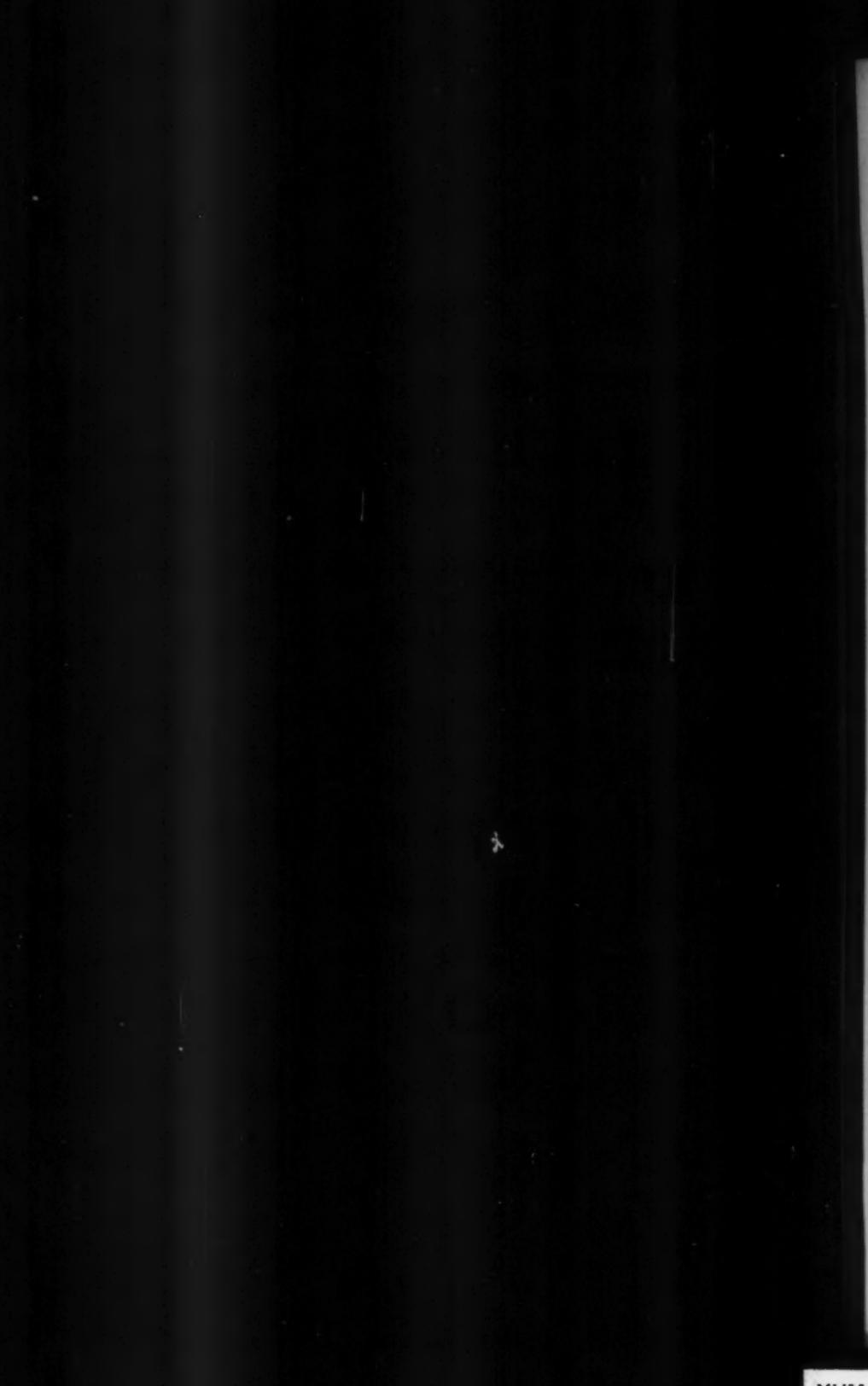
Of the Leasowes itself something must now be said. When Shenstone took its management into his own hands, it consisted of a little estate with a "serpentine river," some woodland, some picturesque hollows, at least three pools and a somewhat shabby house known as the Priory. With that keen love of nature, which always corrected his love of art, he at once set about pioneer-work in landscape gardening. His eye caught the possibilities of the situation, of which he made the most from 1745 to his death. He laid out trim walks and "smooth-shaven lawns," he set up a temple to Pan and planted trees, he utilised skilfully a little ruin and placed seats, each with its inscription in English or Latin, to command beautiful views. Here he would erect a Grecian urn suitably inscribed, there he would contrive a secluded alcove: here he would plan a path to display one or other of his pools at their best, there he would dedicate a darkling grove to Vergil: here he would commemorate some noted guest by putting up a seat with an appropriate inscription, there he would induce a fountain to lift up its clear waters. Moreover he was a true and affectionate friend,

who rejoiced in the visits of his friends, for whom he would do almost anything save regular correspondence. Robert Dodsley often stayed at the Leasowes, of which he has left a full account at the end of the second volume of the posthumously printed "Works."

It is a quarter of a century since I saw this once celebrated place, which was then in a state of comparative ruin and which has been allowed to sink into still further decay. The house remains much as it had always been, not a little unkempt and unfinished. Shenstone spent too much upon his grounds to have enough left to embellish his dwelling. These retain something of their original beauty, to which they could easily be restored with a little care. The poet made much use of his winding stream in the arrangement of his gardens. Overgrown as these now are, we can trace something of their former loveliness. Once the well-kept walks led by the side of the stream, parted wide lawns and passed beneath "umbrageous coverts," to use their owner's exalted phrase. The pools, the fountain, the grove, the little ruin, the tiny waterfalls, where in his fancy Dryads and Naiads loved to dwell, are now shaded by wild undergrowth. In his own time the windows of the house on every side looked upon pretty landscape views, and his favourite seat was set at the foot of a noble beech. In short he used every opportunity of turning his "Farm" into almost the first and certainly the finest example of landscape gardening in its generation. In spite of a provoking artificiality of taste his love of nature was deep and sincere: with William Cowper he did something to lead the way towards a return to nature both in gardening and verse. Such improvements needed more money than he could readily command; indeed he felt the want of at least £200 a year in addition to his paternal income, to carry them out to his satisfaction, though he was continually talking of retrenchment.

At the Leasowes he lived with his country housekeeper,

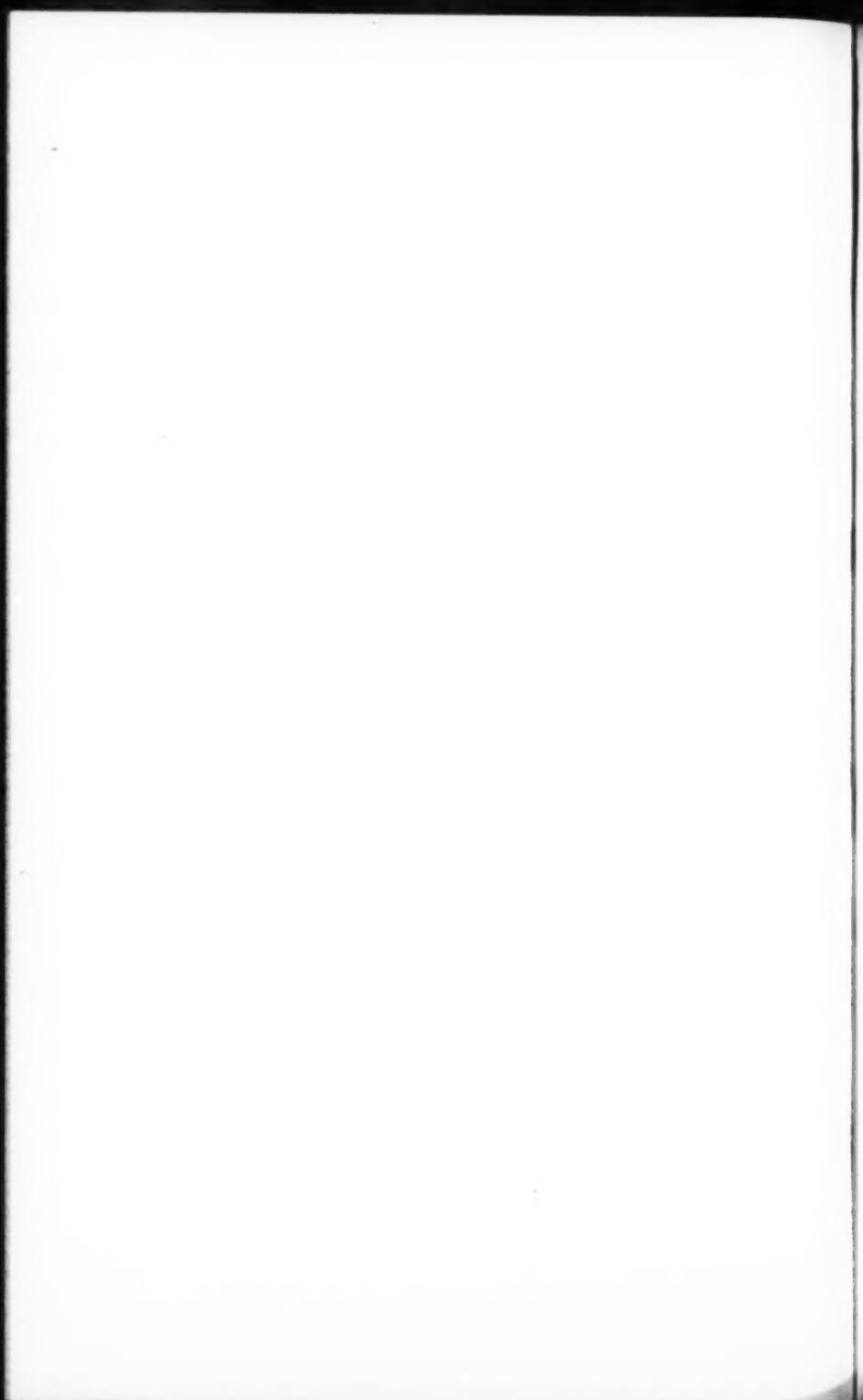






**SHENSTONE'S SEAT.**

*From a Photograph by the  
Rev. F. Sargison.*



Mrs. Cutler, whose superstitions grafted upon an otherwise matter of fact temper, were almost always a source of amusement to him. How did he then pass his time, especially during the winter months, when gardening was out of the question? Once and once only did he engage in a love-affair, which ended unhappily, possibly because while he was leisurely contemplating her charms, a more enterprising swain carried off the lady. His "Pastoral Ballad," composed and polished after his wont somewhere about 1743, is said to commemorate his disappointment. It is divided into four parts, penned in that rather jerky metre sometimes known as anapaestic, which was much imitated by the poets immediately succeeding him. The first part sings of "Absence," the second of "Hope," the third of "Solicitude," the fourth of "Disappointment." From the second part the first two stanzas may be taken, which will serve as an example of the whole:—

My banks they are furnish'd with bees.  
Whose murmur invites one to sleep;  
My grottos are shaded with trees,  
And my hills are white-over with sheep.  
I seldom have met with a loss,  
Such health do my fountains bestow:  
My fountains all border'd with moss,  
Where the hare-bells and violets grow.

Not a pine in my grove is there seen,  
But with tendrils of woodbine is bound:  
Not a beech's more beautiful green,  
But a sweet briar entwines it around.  
Not my fields, in the prime of the year,  
More charms than my cattle unfold;  
Not a brook that is limpid and clear,  
But it glitters with fishes of gold.

The poem in each of its four parts is neatly turned and the rhythm is faultless in its own kind. It has a graceful simplicity and tender feeling, which have induced some

of its critics to esteem it the choicest product of Shenstone's muse. To me the "Schoolmistress" seems to be worth many pastoral ballads so-called. The poem was first published in the fourth volume of Dodsley's "Collection" (1755).

During the intervals of his landscape gardening and in the winter he busied himself with the consideration of subjects for other poems, such as "Flattery or the Fatal Exotic," "Elegies" in James Hammond's metre, an "Essay on Reserve" and an "Essay on *Œconomy*," some of which he completed, though they were not published until after his death. It cannot be truly said that any of these more ambitious efforts have much lasting quality, though Robert Burns was captivated by the smoothness of his "Elegies." In the summer his house was usually filled with visitors, who came to minister to his innocent vanity by their outspoken admiration of his improvements. Amongst these came James Thomson, himself as indolent as his host, who was "very facetious, and very complaisant," and who invited his brother poet to his house at Richmond. Shenstone at once set about composing a noble Latin inscription for a seat, which he set up in honour of his famous guest. He sent several attempts to Mr. Graves to win his opinion of the most suitable, which he finally adopted. Once again near his home he met "that sweet-souled bard Mr. James Thomson in a chaise drawn by two horses length-ways," who promised to visit him again, but who died before he could fulfil his promise.

Sometimes our poet, who could not have been a pretty figure on horseback, went a-hunting with William Pitt the elder: he may have been hunting for a pension. At other times he would try his hand at painting flowers in water-colours with some success in the estimation of his friends. During the summer, while visitors of the rank of Lady Luxborough and the Earl of Stamford came to the Leasowes, Shenstone was comparatively cheerful and

happy, as he conducted them through his grounds, pointing out their "surprising beauties" with a well-pleased courtesy and much inward gratification. But when he was left to himself and when he had no workmen to distract his attention, he would become a prey to hypochondria, or at least to a sense of unspeakable loneliness. On bright days he could enjoy an indolent man's recreation: he confesses, "I am old, very old, for few things give me so much mechanical pleasure as lolling on a bank in the heat of the sun." Sometimes the quiet of his solitude was broken by "wars and rumours of wars." Mr. Graves, whose living was then in Derbyshire, had reason to be seriously alarmed by the advent of the "Young Pretender." From his safer distance our poet could afford to write a long and tranquil letter closely reasoned upon the sin of rebellion. Doubtless Mr. Graves, at whose very gate rebellion was knocking, would agree with him: but it may very well be doubted if he derived much consolation from his friend's epistolary eloquence.

In 1751, his brother Thomas, to whom he was tenderly attached, passed away in his prime to Shenstone's deep and lasting sorrow. A touching letter to Mr. Graves on this melancholy theme has survived, which shows the warmth of the poet's heart in a most affecting manner. Amongst other things he writes,

"You, I think, have *seen* my brother; but perhaps had no opportunity of distinguishing him from the group of others whom we call *good-natured men*. This part of his character was so visible, that he was generally beloved at sight; *I*, who must be allowed to know him, do assure you, that his understanding was in no way inferior to his benevolence . . . . He is now in regard to *this* world no more than a mere idea; and this idea, therefore, though deeply tinged with melancholy, I must, and surely *ought* to cherish and preserve . . . . Though my reason forewarned me of the event, I was not the more prepared for it.—Let me not dwell upon it.—It is altogether insupportable in *every respect*; and my imagination seems more assiduous in educating pain

from this occasion, than I ever yet found it in administering to my pleasure.—This hurts me to no purpose.—I know it; and yet, when I have avocated my thoughts, and fixed them for a while upon common amusements, I suffer the same sort of consciousness as if I were guilty of a crime. Believe me, this has been the most sensible affliction I ever felt in my life; and you, who know my anxiety when I had far less reason to complain, will more easily conceive it now that I am able to describe it . . . . After all, the wisdom of the world may perhaps esteem me a gainer. Ill do they judge of this event, who think that any shadow of amends can be made for the death of a brother, and the disappointment of all my schemes, by the accession of some fortune, which I can never enjoy."

This letter was written in portions parted by days and even weeks; it seemed as if the story of his grief had been wrung out of him slowly and with a severe effort. From beginning to end it is touched with a deep pathos expressed it may be now and then in rather stilted language, but throbbing with real emotion. Shenstone never quite recovered his spirits after the loss of his brother. A distinct change is perceptible in the tone of his letters from that sorrowful event. He seemed to grow lonelier and lonelier, to yield more and more to prolonged fits of depression, as the years passed onward. Moreover his health, especially during the winter months, grew more precarious than before and the intervals between his letters to his intimates became longer and longer. To their tried affection he clung with increasing closeness and in their true sympathy he found comfort in his affliction. Of course it must not be thought that he succumbed entirely to his grief. At one time he would be occupied in "laying out his terrace," at another in improving "Vergil's grove." Once more he would find himself, to say nothing of Mrs. Cutler, "embarrassed with masons, carpenters, and company, all at a time." The next week his indolence would conquer him and he would perforce confess, "I owe all the world at this time, either

letters, visits, or money." He was ever readier to receive guests than to be the guest even of his intimates.

During his "abundant leisure" he would sit in his gloomy room with the portrait of Mr. Graves and a few good pictures looking down upon him from the dingy walls, reading "Chrysal," then a new book, with keen interest, or turning some such song as this:—

The lovely Delia smiles again!  
The killing frown has left her brow:  
Can she forgive my jealous pain,  
And give me back my angry vow?

Love is an April's doubtful day:  
Awhile we see the tempest low'r;  
Anon the radiant heav'n survey,  
And quite forget the flitting show'r.

The flow'rs that hung their languid head,  
Are burnish'd by the transient rains:  
The vines their wonted tendrils spread,  
And double verdure gilds the plains.

The sprightly birds, that droop'd no less  
Beneath the pow'r of rain and wind,  
In every raptur'd note express  
The joy I feel—when thou art kind.

Musician as our poet undoubtedly was, Horace Walpole seems to be right when he charges him with having made many unsuccessful attempts to write a perfect song. All of Shenstone's efforts in this kind resemble the one just quoted. With some natural lines many artificial ideas and classical allusions are blended. I need only note, that a "double verdure," which "gilds the plains" would indeed be a *lusus naturæ* both rare and curious.

So early as 1747 he writes, "I have an alcove, six elegies, a seat, two epitaphs (one upon myself), three ballads, four songs, and a serpentine river." These "Elegies" he increased to twenty-four, which he polished

until he left no unmusical line in them. Like his songs they shew here and there some true appreciation of nature, which is marred by a certain insipid artificiality. He is fond of sounding phrases, such as "rural shepherds," "pensile groves," "Persian luxe," "the Paestan rose," "the strepent horn," "amusive talks," "to decorate repose" and "the pine's nectareous juice," which last if applied to his own pines, would be something of a euphemism for pitch. I add a few stanzas culled from these smooth and melodious poems, that the reader may be enabled to judge of their calibre; since *crimine ab uno discere omnes*. Here is a pretty picture of the sea:—

So smiles the surface of the treacherous main,  
As o'er its waves the peaceful haleyon play;  
When soon rude winds their wonted rule regain,  
And sky and ocean mingle in the fray.

In writing of the death of Pope he shews his love for the simpler objects of nature's botanic garden:—

Where is the dappled pink, the sprightly rose?  
The cowslip's golden cup no more I see:  
Dark and discolour'd ev'ry flow'r that blows,  
To form a garland, Elegy! for thee.

Again we find a host of stanzas such as—

Down yonder brook my crystal bev'rage flows;  
My grateful sheep their annual fleeces bring;  
Fair in my garden buds the damask rose,  
And, from my grove, I hear the throstle sing.

In such sugared speeches his "Elegies" abound; they were not printed till after his death. In them, as has been said, we can catch glimpses of a true love of nature struggling with his fondness for his favourite classical models. Now and then a dainty thought is delicately expressed in musical words. But considered as a whole, his "Elegies" are hardly strong enough to endure the

stress of time. He must have spent much labour in working up his already over-wrought lines. But taken all together they have not the ring of that single stanza from his "Schoolmistress," which gave Gray a hint which he was not slow to improve in his own inimitable fashion :

Yet nurs'd with skill, what dazzling fruits appear!  
Ev'n now sagacious foresight points to show  
A little bench of heedless bishops here,  
And there a chancellor in embryo,  
Or bard sublime, if bard may e'er be so,  
As Milton, Shakespeare, names that ne'er shall die!  
Tho' now he crawl along the ground so low,  
Nor weeting how the muse should soar on high,  
Wisheth, poor starv'ling elf! his paper kite may fly.

Sometimes he would try his hand at an exalted "Ode" to one or other of his possible patrons, if haply he could win the much-desired pension. His "Odes" are no more successful than his "Elegies," with the doubtful exception of that to "Indolence," which was written from his heart and which ends thus :—

Ye busy race; ye factious train,  
That haunt ambition's guilty shrine;  
No more perplex the world in vain,  
But offer here your vows with mine.  
  
And thou, puissant queen! be kind:  
If e'er I shared thy balmy power;  
If e'er I swayed my active mind,  
To weave for thee the rural bow'r;  
  
Dissolve in sleep each anxious care;  
Each unavailing sigh remove;  
And only let me wake to share  
The sweets of friendship and of love.

In restless days like ours there is something to be said for this drowsy philosophy of life, though oddly enough Shenstone was tortured by a lofty ambition, which he was too indolent to pursue. His uncertain health may have

contributed to this inert temper of mind, to which his unwieldly habit of body no doubt ministered. Of his ballads save the "Pastoral Ballad," only one is comparatively well known, that to "Jemmy Dawson," wherein his usually keen sense of fitness deserted him at least once. There must always be something ludicrous in the idea of a fair maiden, even under the painful circumstances of the poem, addressing her lover thus, "O Dawson! monarch of my heart!"

Of his "Levities," which occupied his occasional industry, I need only remark that though light enough, their humour is for the most part defective and unworthy of reanimation. Of them a single stanza has survived to our time: the lines "Written in an Inn at Henley" possess the great virtue of having given one standard quotation to our literature, while they have sufficient power to merit a place here:—

To thee, fair freedom! I retire  
From flattery, cards, and dice, and din;  
Nor art thou found in mansions high'r  
Than the low cot, or humble inn.

'Tis here with boundless pow'r I reign;  
And every health which I begin,  
Converts dull port to bright champagne;  
Such freedom crowns it at an inn.

I fly from pomp, I fly from plate!  
I fly from falsehood's specious grin!  
Freedom I love, and form I hate,  
And chuse my lodgings at an inn.

Here, waiter! take my sordid ore,  
Which lacqueys else might hope to win;  
It buys, what courts have not in store;  
It buys me freedom at an inn.

Whoe'er has travell'd life's dull round,  
Where'er his stages may have been,  
May sigh to think he still has found  
The warmest welcome, at an inn.

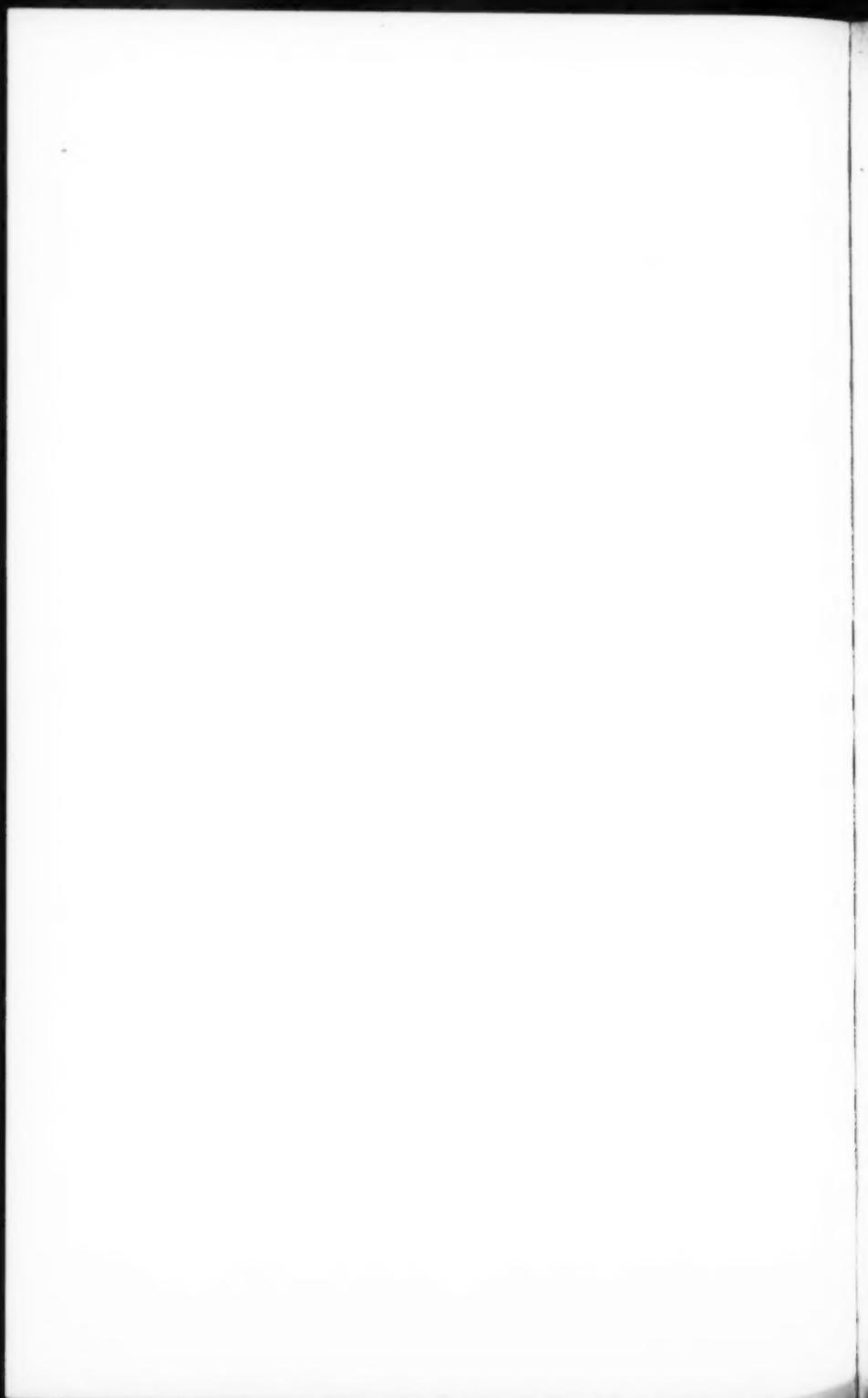






SHENSTONE'S URN IN HAGLEY PARK.

*From a Photograph by the  
Rev. F. Sargison.*



There is a tone of pathos no less than of scorn for worldly pomp in these artless lines, which appeals to the thoughtful reader. It may be noted that they were written before our luxurious days, when the insane practice of dressing for dinner makes the sojourn at an inn far less pleasant, less unconventionally comfortable than once it was. So much for Shenstone's "Levities": nor need any citation be made from his "Morallities," which though rhythmical are prosaic and do small justice to the really bright spirit, which upon occasion peeped forth from the melancholy mask of the lonely poet.

Solitary as he often was, he did not spend all of his days alone at the Leasowes, poring over works like "Rasselas," then first published, of which he pointedly remarks, "Rasselas" has a few refined sentiments thinly scattered, but is upon the whole below Mr. J——." In 1758 there was a "Music Feast" at Worcester, whither he found his way, where he heard with deep delight "The Messiah," then a comparatively new piece. With his wonted keen appreciation of music he wrote: "I presume, nothing in the way of harmony can possibly go further than the Oratorio of 'The Messiah.' It seems the composer's best composition." Posterity has largely assented to Shenstone's judgment on Handel's noble work, though Wagner and Strauss have since arisen to introduce new methods and new discords into the art of music. Here it may be noted that in 1754 Dodsley tried to make arrangements with him for the setting to music by Dr. Arne of his "Pastoral Ballad," which would also have appeared in this form at the end of the fourth volume of his "Collection." But Shenstone's dilatoriness and Arne's terms prevented the completion of this interesting project. Sometimes our poet found himself seated in the chimney-nook of the parsonages of Mr. Jago or Mr. Graves, where, we may be sure, he received a warm welcome. The poets would compare notes and criticise each other's lines without rancour and to their possible amendment, which

rendered so many of them fit for publication by Dodsley.

Hater of cards and lover of good conversation as he was, though often silent, when the subject interested him he could offer wise remarks and witty utterances. I cannot help thinking that he has preserved many of such sayings in his "Essays," most of which are of the nature of brilliant "Table talk." Bearing some resemblance to those of Cowley, they are only inferior in their own kind to his. Naturally truisms are found in them: but truisms abound in all literature and have at least this advantage, they are true. They are rightly called "Essays on Men and Manners," since they are crowded with wise sayings and pungent criticisms of both. The sentences usually follow one another without any directly consecutive plan. We find two thoughts like these in one small paragraph. "Humour and Vanbrugh against wit and Congreve. "The vacant skull of a pedant generally furnishes out a throne and temple for vanity." So in his remarks "On Religion" he has this keen saying:—"It is not now, 'We have seen his star in the east,' but 'we have seen the star on his breast, and are come to worship him.'"

Amongst these "Essays" are many examples of clear and nervous writing, which deserve more attention than they commonly win. One in imitation of Cambrey gives a charming picture of "A Hermit." One tells of "An Adventure" with striking vigour: one scatters the popular "Belief in Ghosts": one pours contempt upon "Cards." One sets forth some "Unconnected Thoughts on Landskip Gardening," which will be found of much use to those who would pursue this interesting art. One gives directions for a prudent study of "Books and Writers": one reveals the inner man in what he calls "Egotisms." As I have said the greater part of the opinions set down in crisp and pungent sentences may well have been uttered in the choice companionship of his intimates. They are lively and vigorous, bearing many marks of the freedom of conversation. Whatever may have been their source,

they sparkle with epigram, wit, wisdom and humour, while they present a most favourable view of their author's reading and character. We do not know when he wrote them, since he never mentions them in his "Familiar Letters," upon which and upon his verse he set a far higher and less merited value.

As he sank into middle age his melancholy and discontent deepened upon him. To add to his discomfort he had a long lawsuit, which cost him both patience and money, but which was finally settled more to his advantage than he had hoped. Twice at least he found his way to Birmingham to see Baskerville's famous press, which produced books by no means surpassed in typography to-day. Another time Thomas Percy, who had his much-doctored manuscript in his possession, was advised to consult our poet. Doubtless Shenstone gave him good advice, which remained unacknowledged, in preparing for the press his noted "Reliques of Ancient Poetry." Then after a long silence he would turn to write warmly affectionate letters to his intimates. Again he would be troubled by his frequent visitor Robert Dodsley, who would fail to keep a long-made appointment. During the bright summer days an increasing crowd of sightseers thronged his house and grounds. But through the slow gloom of winter he was usually out of spirits and longing for congenial companionship. Towards the premature close of his life Robert Dodsley, then having given up his business to his brother James, was engaged with him in preparing for publication by subscription his poems, while he himself was waiting with comparative security for a pension. By the irony of fate the grip of death fastened upon him before either of these happy events could fall to his lot.

On February 11th, 1763, he died of some kind of fever, leaving the bulk of his poems printed in the six-volume edition of Dodsley's "Collection" (1758), nearly half of the fifth volume of which is filled with them. In 1764

the first edition of his "Works" came out in two volumes, and in the same year Robert Dodsley died. Many editions were published by James Dodsley during the years from 1764 to 1769, to which a third volume was added containing his "Familiar Letters." His productions in this kind to Lady Luxborough and to Dodsley himself are not included in this collection. The former are said to have been of a somewhat flatulent nature, as perhaps best fitted the taste of the noble lady to whom they were addressed. Many of the latter are printed in the recent life of the worthy bookseller by Ralph Straus, and form an interesting record of the friendly relations between the author and his publisher, though each may have had good reason sometimes to complain of the other.

So passed away the gentle spirit of William Shenstone with his mortal ambitions unfulfilled. His life was darkened by sorrows and embarrassments caused by his not always considerate expenditure upon his estate. He was a man of many gifts. An artist of some compass and a true lover of music, an essayist of much power and penetrating perception, a poet who could rise upon occasion to a more than commonplace height and a pioneer in landscape gardening, he lived the life of a country gentleman and literary man. But his disposition was so lovable as to attach to him many friends, while it gained him the close and precious intimacy of several men of fine culture and high character. Indolent he was beyond a doubt, but in spite of his own confession he can hardly be called idle. We can imagine him now lolling in the sun meditating an Ode or Song, now taking the pen with reluctant hand to write down the result of his meditations, or to polish his superfine lines. We can picture him superintending the improvements of his "Farm" and using his keen eye for the picturesque to guide his work-people. We can see him as the kindly host entertaining his friends, or proudly displaying his grounds to idle admirers. We can feel the craving of his heart for the

bodily companionship of kindred writers and thinkers. We can see him correcting the verses of his friends and improving Dodsley's prose "Fables," doubtless to the unsmotherable discontent of that genial publisher. He had his own harmless vanity, as he himself well knew and frankly confessed. But neither he nor it injured a living man, while it served to minister pleasantly to his occasional seasons of contentment. His was a pathetic fate to pass away, just as brighter days were dawning upon him.

The Leasowes in its present state is a fitting type of its owner's unfulfilled ambitions. We can still trace something of the neatness of the arrangement of his little estate, of the former excellence of its plan. We can still sit upon some of the seats, on which he himself sat with many of his guests. But the glory of trim orderliness has departed, though the grounds are beautiful in decay. So he aspired to shake Parnassus as a great poet, while only his "Pastoral Ballad," his "Schoolmistress," with one stanza from one short poem are left in the mind of the cultured reader. He longed to make a figure in the greater world: but death met him in the way leaving his longing unfulfilled. His memory remains fragrant as a true friend, as a man of various parts with some distinction in each, as the father of landscape gardening in our land. May the earth lie lightly upon the dust of William Shenstone in the quiet churchyard of Hales Owen. A kindlier heart never beat above it, a gentler mortal never rested beneath it. May this slight memorial win a welcome from his loving spirit, now that he has gone

To where beyond these voices there is peace.

## SOME ASPECTS OF LEIGH HUNT.

By JOHN MORTIMER.

I HAVE been reading "The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt," in an edition published sixty years ago, and which has had a place on my shelves for a great part of that period. I am afraid I must reckon it among my neglected books, so seldom have I traversed the full length of the narrative. And yet, as autobiographies go, this one has special claims upon the booklover's attention, if only on the recommendation of Thomas Carlyle, who declared it to be by far the best of its kind which he remembered to have read in the English language, "a pious, ingenious, and altogether admirable work," he says, and one which aroused in him a deep spirit of devotion. One effect upon myself has been to induce a re-consideration of Leigh Hunt, to the gathering together of some scattered impressions regarding him and his work, and, in the doing of this, to find some measure of literary recreation. In submitting the result, however imperfect, to the members of the Manchester Literary Club some time ago, I brought it before an audience necessarily sympathetic with the subject, and also to one with a special interest in it, inasmuch as the Club once counted among its members, one, now alas! departed, who was on terms of personal friendship with Leigh Hunt, and one of his most devoted and enthusiastic disciples. I allude, of course, to Mr. Alexander Ireland, who, as occasion served, loved to talk there of his favourite author, as he likewise did of those other essayists after his own heart, Hazlitt and Charles Lamb. To these, as to a triad, he brought his best literary affections, and a disposition of mind that was

almost worshipful. I am tempted to dwell on this connection between our departed friend and Leigh Hunt because there seemed to be an affinity between them, so that one came to think of them in company. There was in both the same gentleness of nature and sweetness of disposition. Of Alexander Ireland, as of Leigh Hunt, it could be said that he had a pool of honey about his heart. They were both journalists, displaying the same liberal views in politics, and as Leigh Hunt's name is inseparably associated with the *London Examiner*, so is that of Alexander Ireland with its contemporary the *Manchester Examiner*, which we find referred to in correspondence between them as the godchild of the former. A reference to the local journal, during the latter part of Hunt's life, would show how much our friend did to increase the Essayist's fame, becoming an essayist himself in that labour of love. Moreover when pecuniary assistance for Hunt was desirable, and a dramatic performance, with that object in view, was brought about in the Manchester Theatre Royal by Charles Dickens and his distinguished company of amateurs, our friend worked with a will to ensure its success, as he also did when Hunt's "Legend of Florence" was produced in the same place. Ten years after Hunt's death Mr. Ireland compiled a chronological list of his writings together with those of Lamb and Hazlitt. It took the form of a volume containing upwards of two hundred pages, and was privately printed for the use of the compiler and his friends, the issue being limited to two hundred copies. Hunt's share of the book is by far the greatest, and a perfect mine of wealth in the way of information and comment, the most loving and assiduous care having been used in gathering up and treasuring there whatever contributed to his praise and fame. Very fortunate were those who found themselves possessors of this monumental tribute of personal regard. Of the compiler's own copy, a precious volume, with copious marginal notes in his own handwriting, brought down to

the latest date, it may be said that it is enshrined among the materials from which it was constructed, the works of the three essayists, in various editions, gathered together after Mr. Ireland's death, from his own library, and presented by Thomas Read Wilkinson to Manchester's Free Reference Library, where the collection may be seen bearing the appearance of something sacredly set apart, and confronting you as you pass into the entrance hall of that storehouse of learning in King Street.

Leigh Hunt was a voluminous writer, his output being about fifty volumes, according to the counting of Mr. Ireland, and he presents himself to us in many aspects, as journalist, essayist, poet, and dramatist, but only in the very lightest way can I deal with some of these, and it is to the personal aspect that I am inclined to turn first, that which is obtained from the "Autobiography," the "Correspondence," and some extraneous sources. Among authors he is one who touches the imagination; in his outward graces and inward peculiarities there is something which savours of the romantic. In the way of portraiture his eldest son's description of him will serve, and from that we learn that "he was rather tall, as straight as an arrow, and looked slenderer than he really was. His hair was black and shiny, and slightly inclined to wave, his head was high, his forehead straight and white; his eyes black and sparkling, his general complexion dark. There was in his whole carriage and manner an extraordinary degree of life." This vivacity he displayed both in his conversation and through the medium of his pen. In arriving at the estimate of him, in matters that pertain to intellect and character, the testimony of those who came into personal relationship with him is of great value, and in this respect it may be said that those who knew him best loved him most. Hazlitt, a man not easy to please, and whose temper was as lacking in smoothness as his hair, says, "He improves upon acquaintance. The author translates admirably into

the man. . . . to be admired he needs but to be seen! but perhaps he ought to be seen to be fully appreciated: no one ever sought his society who did not come away with a more favourable opinion of him; no one was ever disappointed, except those who had entertained prejudices against him." Charles Lamb, writing in his defence to Southey, says, "He is one of the most cordial-minded men I ever knew, and matchless as a fireside companion," and Macaulay prefaces a criticism of one of Leigh Hunt's books by saying, "We have a kindness for Mr. Leigh Hunt. We form our judgment of him, indeed only from events of universal notoriety, from his own work and from the works of other writers who have generally abused him in the most rancorous manner. But unless we are greatly mistaken he is a very clever, a very honest, and a very good natured man. We can clearly discern together with many merits, many faults both in his writings and his conduct. But we really think that there is hardly a man living whose merits are so grudgingly allowed, and whose faults have been so cruelly expiated." But it is from Carlyle, who was his neighbour in Chelsea for some time, that one gets the most remarkable testimonial. He says, "Mr. Hunt is a man of the most indisputably superior worth, a *man of genius* in a very strict sense of that word, and in all the senses which it bears or implies; of brilliant varied gifts; of graceful fertility; of clearness, lovingness, truthfulness; of child-like, open character, also of the most pure and even exemplary private deportment; a man who can be other than *loved* only by those who have not seen him, or seen him from a distance through a false medium." It is pleasant to have these opinions from such sources, and brightens the prospect for a wider survey.

It is from the "Autobiography," and by virtue of a delightful process of self-revelation, which never trespasses beyond the bounds of a due restraint, and displays little of that egotism which we are told was one of our author's weaknesses, elsewhere made manifest, that one gets the

main features of his life. He tells of his ancestors and parentage, and, in this direction one is made aware of how much heredity may have had to do with temperament. "For a man," says he, "is but his parents, or some other of his ancestors, drawn out," and so you are left to conclude that for many of his peculiarities there have been previous causes. A buoyancy of spirit, and a certain happy-go-lucky disposition in dealing with the economics of life, he seems to have inherited from his father, and from his mother, a gentleness and sensitiveness of nature, combined with a disposition to melancholy, which he confesses to at times as underlying his mirth. From her too he inherited an ultra conscientiousness, and a horror of violence in words and deeds. As he tells of his childhood you realize how very true it was, in his case, that the boy was father of the man. Once when he had snatched a fearful joy in the utterance of a swear word his remorse was great! "For some time afterwards," he says, "I could not receive a bit of praise, or a pat of encouragement on the head, without thinking to myself, 'Ah! they little suspect that I am the boy who said d—n it.'" Nevermore, however, did he fall in this way, and though he had in his writing to record the strong expletives of others, he can say, when nearing the end of his life, "An oath has not escaped my lips from that day to this."

Charles Lamb had left Christ's Hospital a little time before Leigh Hunt became a scholar there, and both have given us reminiscences, each in his own manner and style, of their experiences in that nursery of knowledge. By a coincidence too, as Hunt tells us, they both left at the same age, with the same rank of Deputy Grecian, and for the same reason, that they both stammered, a defect which stood in the way of further progress, inasmuch as a Grecian was expected to make a public speech on leaving school, and afterwards go into the church. Lamb confirms this in his own humorous way in telling us that an impediment in his speech, which had certainly kept

him out of the pulpit, may likewise be regarded as having prevented him taking to the stage. Lamb stammered more or less to the end of his days, but Hunt apparently overcame the defect. They both became essayists and conversationalists, and if in comparing the results one has to admit a freer-flowing style of speech and writing in Hunt, the stammer of Charles Lamb, which not only occurred in his talk, but seems at times to have infected his pen, was capable of producing a more piquant charm. There were weaknesses of other kinds marking Hunt's school days which were never remedied. He got a good deal of classical knowledge but he never learnt the multiplication table. "Nor do I know it," says he, "to this day! Shades of Horace Walpole and Lord Lyttleton! come to my assistance and enable me to bear the confession; but so it is. The fault was not my fault at the time, but I ought to have repaired it when I went out into the world, and great is the mischief it has done me." But his son Thornton Hunt believed that he could not have repaired it, and that "it was no affectation when he declared himself incompetent to deal with the simplest question of arithmetic. The very commonest sum was a bewilderment to him. . . . It was a born incapacity, similar to that of people who cannot distinguish the notes of music, or the colours of the prism." It was one of the jokes against him, anent this incapacity for counting, that in a drawer filled with half-crowns and shillings, he could not find three shillings and sixpence—the fact is he had no business capacity whatever. Again and again we find him referring with shame and regret to his ignorance of money matters. For instance, he says, "I had never attended, not only to the business part of the *Examiner*, but to the simplest money matters that stared me on the face of it, I could never tell anybody who asked me what was the price of the stamp! Do I boast of this ignorance? Alas! I have no such respect for the pedantry of absurdity as that. I blush for it; and I only record it out of a

sheer painful movement of conscience." While one is dealing with this weakness of Leigh Hunt it may be said that his life throughout was one of pecuniary anxieties and embarrassments. It is a sad story, bringing out into strong relief, by the depths of its shadows, the otherwise sunny brightness of his nature. A mirth-loving and a mirth-inspiring man he had his deep fits of depression, so that we find him saying in one of his letters, written in that Chelsea period when he was a neighbour of Carlyle,

"Often while I am entertaining others in company such a flow of melancholy thought comes over me, that the laughter, if they knew it, would be changed to tears. I never hear a knock at the door, except one or two which I know, but I think somebody is coming to take me away from my family. Last Friday I was sitting down to dinner, having just finished a most agitating morning, when I was called away by a man who brought an execution into my house for forty shillings. It is under circumstances like these that I always write. . . . If you ask me how it is that I bear all this, I answer that I love nature and books, and think well of the capabilities of human kind."

And again, in the same vein, he writes,

"So I hope, oh! how valuable is hope!" [and this is at a time when, to use his own words], "such is the agitation of my mind that I cannot do anything for whole mornings, but pace the room, or go restlessly about the house, doubtful whether I shall have bread for my family from day to day, when it is necessary to borrow shillings to get a dinner or tea with, constant dunning at the door, withholdings of the family linen by the washerwoman, the sight of my children in rags (except the one that I must send out) and twenty other mortifications and distresses *profound*."

It is from his letters, it must be remembered, and not from his "Autobiography" that we get behind the scenes in this way, and it is among Carlyle's letters that we get other glimpses of the domestic interior, the living room with its half-dozen ricketty chairs, its dusty table and ragged carpet, littered with books, papers, egg-shells, and

the rest, with the sickly wife there, and the wild, gipsy-looking children. To Carlyle with his love of order it presents itself as "a poetical tinkerdom." Hunt's room is in better condition, with a couple of chairs, a bookcase, and a writing table, and with Hunt there perfectly at his ease, a king in his own territory, arrayed in something which looks like a painted nightgown, his garb when working, and prepared, in his courteous and communicative way, to talk philosophy, and the assured happiness of mankind in prospect. In her letters Mrs. Carlyle also has to complain how she is called upon to piece out the imperfections of that ill-regulated household, and is the victim of endless borrowings, her crockery, silver spoons, glasses, and even a brass fender being requisitioned, and not easily to be regained by that thrifty housewife. There is just one other sketch of Hunt's environment which may be ventured upon. It belongs to a period seven years or more later, and is from the pen of Nathaniel Hawthorne and a record of his first visit to Leigh Hunt. He says,

"He was then at Hammersmith occupying a very plain and shabby little house, in a contiguous range of others like it, with no prospect but that of an ugly village street, and certainly nothing to gratify his craving for a tasteful environment, inside or out. A slatternly maid-servant opened the door for us, and he himself stood in the entry, a beautiful and venerable old man, buttoned to the chin in a black dress coat, tall and slender, with a countenance quietly alive all over, and the gentlest and most naturally courteous manner. He ushered us into his little study, or parlor, or both,—a very forlorn room, with poor paperhangings and carpet, few books, no pictures that I remember, and an awful lack of upholstery. I touch distinctly upon these external blemishes and the nudity of adornment, not that they would be worth mentioning in a sketch of other remarkable persons, but because Leigh Hunt was born with such a faculty of enjoying all beautiful things that it seemed as if Fortune did him as much wrong in not supplying them as in withholding a sufficiency of vital breath from ordinary men."

When, in the "Autobiography," Hunt touches, as he occasionally does, upon his pecuniary troubles it is always with sorrow, and a sense of gratitude to those who helped him. Among these was Shelley, who he says was a prince in his generosity, and one whose last sixpence he might have shared. To extricate Hunt from debt, he on one occasion made him a present of fourteen hundred pounds, but, says the recipient, "I was not extricated, for I had not yet learned to be careful." After Shelley's death he received, from Mr. Percy Shelley, an annuity of £120, but this we find him asking for in advance. Among other forms of aid he was twice accorded a grant from the Royal Bounty Fund, and was eventually placed on the Civil List for a pension of £200 which he enjoyed for the last twelve years of his life.

But now let me pass, and not unwillingly, from these aspects of Hunt to matter more attractive as we find it in the "Autobiography." Therein he shows, as by a process of evolution, how he became essayist and journalist and when, in the course of the movement, he becomes a theatrical critic he has much to tell of plays and players, and of the latter he gives us delineations of character which, if they lack the subtlety and insight of those of Charles Lamb, have something in them of his peculiar charm. It was a time of youthful enthusiasm, of self-confidence, and independence of judgment in criticism to be smiled at in later years. "Good God!" he exclaims, "to think of the grand opinion I had of myself in those days and what little reason I had for it!"

When one comes to the founding of the *Examiner* it is to enter upon a period of storm and stress and to learn something of the pains and penalties in store for a journalist of independent mind. It is not to the purpose to dwell upon these but there are some things incidental to the situation of interest here. Hunt's retrospective glance at the period has its amusing features. His new office of editor, combined with his previous achievements in

criticism, it seems had turned his head. Recalling his cock-sureness in all things, he says, "I wrote though anonymously, in the first person, as if, in addition to my theatrical pretensions, I had suddenly become an oracle in politics; the words philosophy, poetry, criticism, and statesmanship, nay, even ethics and theology, all took a final tone on my lips . . . it was all done out of a spirit of foppery and "fine writing" . . . I blush to think what a simpleton I was, and how much of the consequences I deserved." One effect of this independent spirit in politics was, as every one knows, to land him in gaol for a libel on the Prince Regent. Among other offensive references he had described the first gentleman in Europe as an Adonis of fifty. It was an event that might have served Thackeray's purpose when he came to deal with George the Fourth in those essays on the monarchs of that name. This was not one of the consequences which Hunt could regard as among the deserving ones, but he faced it bravely and to prison he went like a bird to a cage. Like Lovelace, however, he could sing,

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.

Straightway, with characteristic philosophy, and disregard for money cost, he proceeds to turn his prison-house into a fairy bower. He says, "I papered it with a trellis of roses; I had the ceiling coloured with clouds and sky; the barred windows I screened with venetian blinds, and when my bookcases were set up, with their busts, and flowers and a pianoforte made their appearance, perhaps there was not a handsomer room on that side the water." Outside too, he contrived to have a little pleasure comprising a grass plot, a flower garden, and trees. To indulge his love for Italian poetry he bought a work in fifty-six volumes, called the "Parnaso Italiano," and paid thirty pounds for it, though, as he finds afterwards, he

could have obtained it for a third of the money. It was "a lump of sunshine" on his shelves, however, and that was enough. Here he was free to have his family about him and here he held a kind of literary court with Lord Byron, Tom Moore, Hazlitt, and Charles Lamb among his courtiers. This imprisonment, which lasted two years, is worthy of note if only to bring into evidence the good nature of the victim who, in the retrospect of all the circumstances, says of the libelled Prince, "Could I meet him in some odd corner of the Elysian fields, where charity had room for both of us, I should first apologize to him for having been the instrument in the hands of events for attacking a fellow-creature, and then expect to hear him avow as hearty a regret for having injured myself, and unjustly treated his wife."

Our author's good nature shines out conspicuously when he comes to talk of his friends among whom were Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, and Lamb and of the latter two we find him saying, "if the world is to remain always as it is, give me to all eternity new talk of Coleridge, and new essays of Charles Lamb. They will reconcile it beyond all others and that is much." One would like to say something of his residence in Italy, which though it lasted but three years occupies, in the narrative, one hundred pages, or about a fourth of the book, but this may not be.

If a reader of Leigh Hunt's essays had to gain his knowledge of the author and his environment from that source alone, and without having had recourse to the "Autobiography" or the "Correspondence," one can imagine how charming the impression would be. He would find himself in touch with a writer who had formed his style upon the models of Steele, Addison, and Goldsmith, as he avowedly did, because, as he said, this gave him ease of expression, when he found a subject which pleased him. And combined with this ease and grace there would be apparent that desirable quality limpidity, by which as in a smooth transparency of the current, the "thoughts lie

clear as pebbles in a brook." Hazlitt said of him that he had inherited more of the spirit of Steele than any other man since his time. Moreover, like Thackeray, he seems to have preferred honest Dick Steele, with all his faults, to Joseph Addison with all his essays. On the more serious side, also, do they seem as authors to come together, inasmuch as Steele wrote "The Christian Hero," and Hunt "The Religion of the Heart." As an essayist he takes upon himself to be your companion, guide, philosopher and friend. He has much to say to you, even voluminously, about Nature and Books; these are two great departments in which his mind finds exercise, and there is also a philosophy of life to be considered. For all these purposes he is well equipped. His extensive, if not exhaustive, knowledge of English literature, especially on the poetical side, and his intimate acquaintance and sympathy with that of Italy are as much in evidence as the beauty of his style. Then as to the choice and range of his subject matter, that seems practically illimitable, in its possibilities, and he touches nothing which he does not adorn. He tells you that he is interested in things great and small, "in a print, in a plaster cast, in a hand-organ, in the stars, in the sun . . . in the flower on his table, in the fly on his paper," as he writes. In illustration of this we find him, in one of his letters, pausing to say to his friend, in parenthesis; "There is a little spider drinking at the top of this page, a drop of water which has fallen from some flowers which I have been taking out of a glass. It was bigger than himself. He has half-swallowed it and is now walking off to my blotting paper evidently refreshed," and, in closing his epistle he reports further that the spider has got under the shade of a curl-up of the blotting paper, and there seems gone to sleep after his flowery potations." By virtue of this power of observation he calls himself a "Seer," whose purpose it is to refresh the "Common Places" of life, and in pursuance of it he discourses to you on your everyday experiences, on things

familiar to you through wide ranges, and among the subjects of his essays you have these, "A Word on Early Rising," "A Flower for your Window," "Put up a Picture in your Room," "Breakfast in Summer," "The Cat by the Fire," "On Washerwomen," "A Day by the Fire," "A Rainy Day," "A Dusty Day," "The East Wind," "A Pinch of Snuff," "Of Sticks," "A Chapter on Hats," "On a Pebble," "Windows," and so on in a progression which includes topics of a more abstruse kind. In treating of these things his avowed object is to give you pleasure, innocent kindly pleasure, and to combine with it something instructive and elevating. To this end like a bee, and with the same lightness of wing, he goes about sipping honey from various sources, and the cells in which he stores it are his essays. One collection of these he describes as "A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla," perhaps to have used the term "Hive" would have suited better. In addition to sweetening your life in this way he desires to open your eyes to the beauty of the world, and help you to enjoy it, and in this aspect he gives you the impression of a gay, light-hearted optimist. It is of his mission to promote cheerfulness, and happiness all round. He says, "We would make adversity hopeful, prosperity sympathetic, all kinder, richer and happier." In his philosophy he is an Epicurean to the extent of a desire that pleasure should triumph over pain. He believes that there is "a soul of goodness in things evil," and that to evils which have happened to him in his life he owes some of his greatest blessings. In these efforts to please and instruct you there is an enthusiasm which is youthful in its freshness. The hopefulness, vivacity, and open-eyed wonderment of the boy are everywhere manifest, in point of fact from the opening to the closing chapter of his life he was a boy. Lamb speaks of his boyish sportiveness, and Hawthorne who saw him as an old man describes this blending of youth with age, in aspect and conversation, as one of the "most wonderfully illusive transformations"

he had ever met with. In his opening essay in "The Seer," Hunt says, "We have been at this work now off and on (for we began essay writing in our teens) for upwards of thirty years . . . and we have the same hope, the same love, the same faith in the beauty and goodness of nature, and all her prospects in space and time; we could almost add, if a sprinkle of white hairs in our black would allow us, the same youth."

As I have said his affections were divided between Nature and Books. Lamb was an avowed scorner of the fields, but to Hunt they were productive of delights unaffected by that other humourist. He says, "A common meadow is a sorry thing to a ditcher or a coxcomb, but by the help of its dues from imagination, and the love of nature the grass brightens for us, the air soothes us, we feel as we did in daisied hours of childhood. Its verdures, its sheep, its hedge-row elms—all these and all else which sight, and sound and associations can give it, are made to furnish a treasure of pleasant thoughts." His love for nature however finds expression within somewhat narrower limits. It belongs to the field and garden; there is in it nothing that relates to the mountains or moorlands. It is for the most part, the nature round London and it was not given to him to look upon that with the eye of a Richard Jefferies. He delights in it in an indolently-contemplative and sensuous way. In one of his letters written in London, on a hot August day, he says,

"Every Saturday, when I go to office I seem to walk through valleys of burning bricks, the streets and pavements are so intensely hot, but there is a perpetual fanning of fresh air in the fields, and you may imagine I am often there. Sometimes, I ramble about in them, sometimes take my meals, sometimes lie down and rest. The other day I had a delicious sleep on a haycock. These green fields and blue skies throw me into a kind of placid intoxication. Are there any moments more delicious than the one in which you feel yourself going to slumber with the sense of grass

about you, of the air in your face, and the great arching sky over your head?"

When he had come back to them from Italy, he says,

"I know not in which I take more delight—the actual fields and woods of my native country, the talk of such things in books, or the belief which I entertained that I should one day be joined in remembrance with those who talked it. I used to stroll about the meadows half the day, with a book under my arm, generally a "*Parnaso*" or a Spenser, and wonder that I met nobody who seemed to like the fields as I did. The jests about Londoners and Cockneys did not affect me in the least, as far as my faith was concerned. They might as well have said that Hampstead was not beautiful or Richmond lovely; or that Chaucer and Milton were Cockneys when they went out of London to lie on the grass and look at the daisies."

Of flowers and their associations with the poets it is inevitable that we should find him gossiping. As he sits at his breakfast-table with an essay on Spring in view, and his eyes fixed on a set of British poets, from the street he hears a child's voice crying "Wallflowers," and he is instantly prompted to go and buy some. It is characteristic. He likes to have flowers about him, they minister to his enjoyment in innocent ways; he would have them on his breakfast-table and exhorts you to do likewise. "Set flowers on your table," says he, "a whole nosegay if you can get it, or but two or three—or a single flower, a rose, a pink, nay a daisy. Bring a few daisies and buttercups from your last field walk, and keep them alive in a little water, aye preserve but a bunch of clover or a handful of flowering grass, one of the most elegant, as well as cheap of nature's productions, and you have something on your table that reminds you of the beauties of God's creation, and gives you a link with the poets and sages that have done it most honour." And so on, through pages, he can write thus meandering along in the most delightfully-animated way, and to the infection of his

reader, if he be not akin to the scoffer who wickedly said that Leigh Hunt's love for flowers was so great, that, going on one occasion to gather from the grass what he supposed was a buttercup he was disappointed in finding that it was only a guinea.

That he loved books, with a wide and all-embracing love, is beyond question. He has said more in praise of them than any other man, and it was by reason of this that when Mr. Ireland, came to compile his "Book-Lover's *Enchiridion*," he found himself compelled to allot space to Leigh Hunt out of all proportion, in extent, to the rest. "My Books," is the subject of one of his choicest essays, and there the tale of his love is told with all the fervour of which he was capable. It was written in Italy, and, in his description of his study, he gives you a glimpse, as through a window of his mind, of his attitude to nature and books in their relative proportions. He says, "On one side it looks towards a garden and the mountains; on another to the mountains and the sea, what signifies this? I turn my back upon the sea; I shut up even one of the side windows looking upon the mountains, and retain no prospect but that of the trees. On the right and left of me are book-shelves; a book-case is affectionately open in front of me, and thus, kindly enclosed with my books and the green leaves I write." Books are a necessity of life, he likes to be walled-in with them, to have them as an entrenchment about him; they are a defence against many of the evils by which he is assailed. The very contact with them, by touch, brings exquisite pleasure, the nearer they are the dearer. He likes to lean his head against them, and when he comes to die he could wish to take his departure with his head resting upon a book. After passing in review a long array of authors who have gained his affections he says, beautifully, "How pleasant it is to reflect that all these lovers of books have themselves become books;" in that shape does he desire that he may himself survive.

Of Leigh Hunt as poet I have but little to say, which is by no means to be taken in any sense of undervaluation. Among poets, though not ranking with the greatest, he has a distinct and honourable place. For myself I cannot claim, in this respect, to be on terms of familiar intercourse with him, and am quite prepared to take him at his own estimate as expressed in one of his letters. He says, regarding some criticisms of himself which have been submitted to him:—

"It is hard to be put after Southe and some others. I think myself as much superior to Southe as I am inferior to Wordsworth. . . . At the same time I am very sincere in thinking my poetical faculty inferior to Wordsworth's—I suspect that Keats would have beaten us both. He beats me entirely, in pure abstract poetry, such as that of the old poets."

But twenty-five years afterwards we find he has changed his opinion of Wordsworth. To his friend J. F. (presumably John Forster) he says, "Wordsworth, I am told does not care for music, and it is very likely, for music (to judge from his verses) does not seem to care much for him. I was astonished, the other day, on looking in his works for the first time after a long interval, to find how deficient he was in all that may be called the musical side of a poet's nature,—the genial, the animal-spirited, or bird-like—the happily accordant. Indeed he does not appear to me now, more than half the man I took him for, when I was among those who came to the rescue for him, and exaggerated his works in the heat of 're-action.'" He goes on to express himself almost contemptuously of his former idol, and of his disposition to depose the god he had helped to set up, and put Coleridge in his stead. Like many other poets Leigh Hunt had a fairly good conceit of himself, and in one instance at least, thought he could do better than Tennyson with the same subject, that of "Lady Godiva." Hunt inscribed his poem to his friend

John Hunter, and, in forwarding it, claims for himself more delicacy of treatment, and a truer conception of the spirit of the theme than his rival displays. Tennyson's mistake, it seems, consists in his having substituted the gross letter for the spirit, and thereby "parading the naked body."

"And as one mistake," says Hunt, "brings another, he violated even the most obvious probability and matter-of-fact, making poor Godiva absolutely come naked down the stairs of her own house, and sneak without any necessity from pillar to post in consequence; when it is clear that she would have done as any lady would do in like circumstances, or as she does when she goes to bathe—keep herself wrapped in something till the last moment."

All the same I must confess that I do not care for Leigh Hunt's poem, with its rhymed lines, preferring rather that of him who shaped the city's ancient legend into blank verse as he waited for the train at Coventry.

On the ground of delicacy in the choice and treatment of a subject Hunt found himself taken seriously to task when he wrote "The Story of Rimini," and among those who attacked the English bard the Scottish reviewers were the most waspish. Even Lamb thought it was an ill-judged subject for a poem. Hunt has himself been guilty of saying some severe things about Dante's "Inferno," which he thinks was written in a vindictive spirit, and as for the author, he expresses the opinion that he "was one of the greatest poets and most childishly-mistaken men that ever existed." Nevertheless in the "Inferno" Hunt found the material for his poem in which he lengthens out, through four cantos, the concentrated tragedy of Dante's brief episode, which some of us find all-sufficient in its severe simplicity. It is in the setting of the story that one finds its most attractive features, especially in the third canto, where, with exquisite beauty of description, Hunt introduces us to places of "nestling green for poets made." It was dedicated to Lord Byron, but that poet

was a trifle ungenerous in his reception of it. He thought Hunt was a poet spoiled by circumstances. He says, "A friend of mine calls 'Rimini,' *Nimini, Pimini*. . . . But 'Rimini' has a great deal of merit. There never were so many fine things spoiled as in 'Rimini.'"

If Hunt had written nothing but "Abou Ben Adhem" it would have sufficed to keep his memory green, and of all his sonnets there is one addressed "To the Nile" which in its abiding charm, for me at any rate, transcends the rest:—

It flows through old hush'd Egypt and its sands,  
Like some great mighty thought threading a dream,  
And times and things, as in that vision, seem  
Keeping along it their eternal stands,—  
Caves, pillars, pyramids, the shepherd bands  
That roamed through the young world, the glory extreme  
Of high Sesostris, and that southern beam,  
The laughing queen that caught the world's great hands.

Then comes a mightier silence, stern and strong,  
As of a world left empty of its throng,  
And the void weighs on us, and then we wake  
And hear the fruitful stream lapsing along  
'Twixt villages, and think how we shall take  
Our own calm journey on for human sake.

Hunt, in the exercise of the poetic faculty, indulged himself largely with translations, but nothing of his from Homer, Theocritus, or Dante sticks in one's mind like his rendering, in "The Jovial Priest's Confession" of the witty lines of that lover of good living, Walter Mapes, Archdeacon of Oxford in the time of Henry the Second, these being the opening ones:—

I devise to end my days—in a tavern drinking;  
May some Christian hold for me—the glass when I am  
shrinking;  
That the Cherubim may say—when they see me sinking,  
God be merciful to a soul—of this gentleman's way of  
thinking.

As a poet I like best to think of Hunt in connection with those verses inscribed "To T. L. H., six years old, during a sickness," and in which he expresses the thoughts which welled up from the deep heart of him as he sat anxiously watching at the bedside of his eldest boy. These are some of the stanzas:—

Sleep breathes at last from out thee,  
My little, patient boy ;  
And balmy rest about thee  
Smooths off the day's annoy.  
I sit me down, and think  
Of all thy winning ways ;  
Yet almost wish, with sudden shrink,  
That I had less to praise.

Thy sidelong pillow'd meekness,  
Thy thanks to all that aid,  
Thy heart, in pain and weakness,  
Of fancied faults afraid ;  
The little trembling hand  
That wipes thy quiet tears,  
These, these are things that may demand  
Dread memories for years.

\* \* \* \* \*

To say "He has departed"—  
"His voice"—"his face"—is gone ;  
To feel impatient-hearted,  
Yet feel we must bear on ;  
Ah, I could not endure  
To whisper of such woe,  
Unless I felt this sleep ensure  
That it will not be so

It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of these words, there is tenderness in the very tones of them.

In addition to his poetry he wrote a number of plays, only two of which found their way to the stage, "Lover's Amazements," and "The Legend of Florence." Regarding the latter and its representation in Manchester, there

is, among Hunt's letters, one to Mr. Alexander Ireland, relating to that event, in which, having heard from his correspondent that on the opening night there were very few persons in the boxes, he makes the suggestion that perhaps it would be well to inform the people of our town that the play had been performed at Windsor Castle, by command of the Queen, and so stimulate them to a more appreciative interest in it.

Leigh Hunt was a much maligned author, and by many people sadly misunderstood especially by some who dwelt north of the Tweed. Distance, in his case, did not lend enchantment to the view. In *Blackwood* he was subjected to a brutality of treatment in criticism which was outrageous. But he outlived all this, and to find place as a writer in *The Edinburgh Review*, and *Tait's Magazine*. Christopher North, who was among his fiercest assailants in *Blackwood*, was won over and made the *amende honorable*. In "Noctes Ambrosianæ," addressing the Shepherd, he says, "Mr. Hunt's *London Journal*, my dear James, is not only beyond all comparison, but out of all sight, the most entertaining and instructive of all the cheap periodicals . . . and when laid, as it daily is, once a week on my breakfast-table, it lies there—but is not permitted to lie long—like a spot of sunshine dazzling the snow." Among the adverse things that befel him in his life-time it was Leigh Hunt's fate to find himself made use of for the creation of an objectionable character in fiction, and this at the hands of one of his dearest friends, Charles Dickens, who, in part, translated him into the Harold Skimpole of "Bleak House." We know that the great novelist repudiated the charge of having derived from Hunt those features of Skimpole which rendered him contemptible, but there could be no doubt whatever as to the source from which he got the germ idea of the character. It was a literary indiscretion, to say the least of it, and to a great extent deplorable. One can understand, however, how Dickens was tempted

by certain peculiarities in Hunt to exaggerate and distort them in order to create the character. Hunt's easy philosophy of life, his optimism; his airy lightness in the pursuit of pleasure, the conditions under which he sometimes lived, his apparent want of a due sense of responsibility in money matters; these with the possession, on the part of Dickens of a fatal facility for imitating Hunt's style in writing, proved irresistible, but the mischief lay in associating the original with such an unworthy object in the result.

How different from the fantastic creation of Dickens is the real Leigh Hunt as we have come to know him from the various sources available to us! For my own part I must say that this renewal of acquaintance has been to the increase of my esteem, so that I cannot take leave of him without feelings of very kindly regard. On the literary side I am not disposed to assume the critical attitude, or seek to explain why it is that I find myself more frequently turning to other essays than his for mental refreshment, say, for instance, to those of Hazlitt and Lamb on the shelf above. I am content to take him as he is, and accept what he has to offer with thankfulness, knowing that it comes from an honest pen, and is of his best. Whatever may be the measure or value of his philosophy it is at any rate sincere. The gospel of chéerfulness, hopefulness, and the belief that everything is for the best, he not only preached but practised. He had to endure much physical suffering and, as we have seen, mental worries innumerable, but he is never found losing heart or hope to the end. As a genial humorist he contributed to the gaiety of life, but he was also an altruist who had in him much of the enthusiasm of humanity. In this respect he resembles his own "Abou Ben Adhem," and no more fitting epitaph could have been found for him than the pious request contained in that clear-shining line,

Write me as one that loves his fellow-men.

## THE IDEAL LIBRARY : THE LIBRARY IN RELATION TO KNOWLEDGE AND LIFE.

By WILLIAM E. A. AXON.

**I**F the most accomplished and most enthusiastic librarian in the world were possessed of Aladdin's power, and summoned the Spirit of the Lamp, not to build a gorgeous palace for his beloved princess, but to erect an ideal library for the benefit of the world, what would it be likely to contain?

The dream library, standing in its fair pleasaunce, a structure beautiful and spacious, of ample proportions and conveniently arranged both for study and recreation, what would the Magician Librarian desire to place upon its myriad shelves? The library is an instrument of culture, of research, of moralization, and, as the record of human effort and aspiration, touches learning and life at every point. The ideal library would form a complete narrative of the past history of mankind, a record of all that men have found out or surmised about the physical facts of the universe, from the giant worlds that roll in space, to the tiniest insect that can be detected by the strongest microscope; all that men have thought about that which has not material form; all that poet and sage, teacher and prophet, have said about ethics; all that men have invented and devised for the arts and pleasures of life—in short all the documentary evidences of human activity since the advent of man upon the globe. Such a library never has existed and never can exist, but it is the ideal archetype to which all libraries, consciously or

unconsciously, seek to approximate. Even in Utopia such a mass of literature, good, bad or indifferent would be impossible, for it would embrace all that human wisdom and human folly has ever entrusted to the recording word. Physical and financial considerations impose upon all existing libraries the necessity of selection, but the ideal library would be all embracing and include all the literature of every land and of every science.

Would the ideal library include "trash"? Must everything be preserved? Such inquiries are natural enough in an age when the printing press vomits forth by day and night much that the sober-minded could easily spare. But everything that comes from the human brain is an evidence of what the mind of man can accomplish, if not for wisdom then for folly. The most stupid production that ever flowed from a pen is at least a human document. And who shall decide what is and what is not "trash"? The legendary dictum attributed to Al-Moumenin Omar who declared that whatever was opposed to the Koran was noxious and whatever agreed with its teachings was unnecessary—a dictum at once practical and thorough,—has not earned either the assent or the gratitude of posterity. Sir Thomas Bodley, the munificent founder of the great Oxford Library, a learned man and a friend of learning, excluded plays and pamphlets from his great collection, as mere "riff raff." He thus missed the opportunity of making a matchless collection of Elizabethan literature, and of furnishing to future ages the material for solving many of the problems that now perplex the student of the most glorious period of English literature. To Bodley the plays of Shakspere as they came singly from the press were "trash," and he died before they were collected into the goodly "First Folio." That the friends as well as the foes of learning can make such enormous blunders may give us pause in the effort to decide what is unworthy of preservation. "What," asked Panizzi, "is the book printed in the

British Dominions . . . utterly unworthy of a place in the National Library"? And he tells of a British library that was entitled to books under the copyright law and that solemnly rejected Scott's "Antiquary," Shelley's "Alastor," and Beethoven's musical compositions, as unworthy of a place upon the shelves. Everything that has come from the human mind has a certain value. True its value may be pathological, an evidence of mental or moral aberration, but pathology is an important department of science, and in the midst of its sadness, pathetic or grotesque, blossoms the flower of hope. The historian can usefully illuminate his annals by citations from the trivial and ephemeral literature of the period of which he writes. A ballad will express the feelings of the multitude at least as clearly, and as truthfully, as a despatch will exemplify the designs of ambassadors or Kings.\* A volume valued as theology in the fifteenth century may now be highly treasured not for its literary contents but as the handiwork of an early printer. That which was once thought to be sober science may now be folk lore, but it is still a matter for investigation.

The intimate nature of its relationship to the whole range of human knowledge and human conduct becomes evident when we realize fully that the essential note of the library is universality. All that relates to Man, and the Universe in which he has his place, it is the function of the library to remember. There we ought to find all that successive scientific investigators have taught us of his bodily structure and of the complicated processes by which the mystery of life is sustained; all that has been ascertained of the changes that follow when the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl is broken and the dust returns to the earth as it was. There we should be able to read the history of the races of men since the first dawn

\* An admirable paper on "The idea of a Great Public Library" appears in the Library Association Record for April, 1903, from the pen of Mr. Thomas W. Lyster, M.A., of the National Library of Ireland.

of human life upon the globe; the struggle of man in his efforts for the conquest of nature; the horror and the heroism, the mixture of grandeur and grotesque in the crimes of conquerors and in the struggles of the enslaved; the rise and fall of empires, the transformation of savage tribes into civilized nations. And the Library must record the painful evidence of degeneration from higher to lower types not less than those documents which convince us that

tho' the ages, one increasing purpose runs  
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of  
the suns.

If it is the function of the Library to preserve the records of man acting in the corporate capacity of clan or nation, not less so is it to keep account of those members of the race who by the force of their individuality stand out, whether for praise or reproach, from the common mass. Apart from its fascination as a picture of human life and character Biography has a practical value both as warning and incentive. The Library should conserve for us all that the thinkers have formulated as to the conduct of life, the rules for the guidance of the individual in his duties to himself, in his relations to his fellows, in the contact of man with man, in the laws and tendencies to be seen in his industries and commerce, in the relation of nation to nation, of race to race, of class to class. Nor is it of less interest to us to know the marvels of industry, the wondrous processes by which the properties and forces of the earth and of the universe are utilised for the service of man. The relation of man to nature, the secrets of bird and beast, of flower and tree, of all the myriad creatures, past and present, that make up the sum of the life of our world, these are to be noted in our ideal library. There too we must look for the record of all that can be ascertained and surmised of the countless worlds, moving

in empyreal space, worlds beyond the sight of man, yet known though unseen.

The Library is the temple of art as well of science and in its open volumes we may gaze upon the glowing visions seen by Phidias, by Raphael, by Michelangelo, by all those who in many lands and climes have interpreted to their fellows the strength and harmony of nature and the beauty of the human form. The power of the artist is immensely increased by the possibility of reproduction and by the popularisation of art in the library. That such reproductions can never convey all the beauty of the originals may be quite true, but whatever may evaporate in the process of transfer enough remains for pleasure and inspiration. There is an illustration of this in the pathetic reference to Raphael's "Madonna della Seggiola" in Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford" (chap. xi.). A soldier's wife in India, whose previous children have died, tramps with her baby to secure a passage to England that the child may have a chance to live. She tells her story:

"And when Phoebe was coming, I said to my husband, 'Sam, when the child is born, and I am strong, I shall leave you; it will cut my heart cruel; but if this baby dies too, I shall go mad; the madness is in me now; but if you let me go to Calcutta, carrying my baby step by step it will, maybe, work itself off; and I will save, and I will hoard, and I will beg—and I will die—to get a passage home to England, where our baby may live? God bless him! He said I might go; and he saved up his pay, and I saved every pice I could get for washing or any way; and when Phoebe came, and I grew strong again, I set off. It was very lonely; through the thick forests, dark again with their heavy trees—along by the river's side (but I had been brought up near the Avon in Warwickshire, so that flowing noise sounded like home)—from station to station, from Indian village to village, I went along, carrying my child I had seen one of the officers' ladies with a little picture, ma'am—done by a Catholic foreigner, ma'am—of the Virgin and the little Saviour, ma'am. She had him on her arm, and her form was

softly curled round him, and their cheeks touched. Well, when I went to bid good-bye to this lady, for whom I had washed, she cried sadly; for she, too, had lost her children, but she had not another to save, like me; and I was bold enough to ask her, would she give me that print. And she cried the more, and said *her* children were with that little blessed Jesus; and gave it me, and told me she had heard it had been painted on the bottom of a cask, which made it have that round shape. And when my body was very weary and my heart was sick (for there were times when I misdoubted if I could ever reach my home, and there were times when I thought of my husband; and one time when I thought my baby was dying), I took out that picture and looked at it, till I could have thought the mother spoke to me and comforted me."

The Library should garner all that shows the development of the religious spirit. No manifestation of man's reaching out to the infinite, however ineffectual or however sordid is to be despised. "Where others have prayed before to their God in their joy or in their agony is of itself a sacred place."\* The speculations of philosophers as to the contents and methods of the human mind, its powers and its limitations should find a place in the Library. Nor should the song of the poet or the fictions of the story teller be excluded. That fiction responds to a need of human nature may be safely inferred from its universal popularity. A great critic has styled poetry a criticism of life, and the phrase may with at least equal justice be applied to nearly every variety of fiction, whether in verse or prose, and whether it take the form of novel, romance, drama or apologue. For every work of fiction, great or small, shapeless or artistic, wise or foolish, is the author's solution of some problem of existence, presented to his mind as the result of experience or of vision. The hackneyed but beautiful Terentian phrase applies to the Library which aims at being the record of Man and therefore

\* Gaskell's "Cranford," Chap. xi.

finds nothing alien or out of place that relates to Man. Well has Matthew Arnold said:—

Look, the world tempts our eye,  
And we would know it all!  
We map the starry sky,  
We mine this earthen ball,  
We measure the sea-tides, we number the sea-sands;

We scrutinize the dates  
Of long-past human things,  
The bounds of effaced states,  
The lines of deceased kings;  
We search out dead men's words, and works of dead men's  
hands;

We shut our eyes and muse  
How our own minds are made,  
What springs of thought they use,  
How righten'd, how betrayed—  
And spend our wit to name what most employ unnamed

But still, as we proceed  
The mass swells more and more  
Of volumes yet to read,  
Of secrets to explore.

Centuries ago Michael the Bishop spoke with enthusiasm of the "Book of the Wise Philosophers"—a sort of miniature library in one volume.\* "In this book," he says, "are gathered together many discourses of exhortation and doctrine. This book gladdens the heart and increases the understanding of the intelligent. In it the wise philosophers have told of noble and of famous deeds. It contains the wisdom of the wise and the pronouncements of the learned. It is a light of inquiry and a lamp of understanding. There is in it a chain of profit, and it

\* The book was a translation in Ethiopic from the Arabic. A German version by Dr. C. H. Cornhill appeared in 1875 and is described in "The Library," October, 1903, by the present writer.

is to be preferred to gold and silver and to precious stones. It is fairer than the flowers of the garden. What garden can be compared to it in the fairness of its aspect and in the fragrance of its scent? And this garden can be carried in the breast and sheltered in the heart. And this book can make thy understanding fruitful, and God the Almighty may enlarge thy understanding, and make thee to know many things, and make thy character noble, and give increase in all talents. . . . And it is an eloquent although a dumb and silent monitor. If thou have not gained aught else from its preference, has it not kept thee from sitting with fools and from communing with the wicked? This book is a great inheritance for thee, and a shining glory, and a beloved brother, and a faithful servant, and a joy-bringing messenger." If a small ethical manual thus impressed the wisdom-loving Michael what would we have said to a great modern library with its storehouses of all that the human mind has wrought for instruction and delight?

"Knowledge grows from more to more," and in the midst of its immense and bewildering variety we are gradually feeling towards a sense of unity. There may be unity in diversity as there may be progression by antagonism. When the Royal Society was established in 1662 its aim was declared to be "the promotion of natural knowledge," the intention being, presumably in the interests of peace, to exclude all that relates to the spiritual faculties as supernatural and beyond the scope of research. Some at least of the later academies wisely avoid such limitations and deal with all subjects that can be dealt with from the point of view of scholarship. The Smithsonian Institution, that remarkable gift from a son of the Old World to the sons of the New World for the benefit of both hemispheres, was founded for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." Is there a better definition of the function of the library? The ideal collection of books knows no limitations of

subject, but takes all knowledge for its province. It certainly does not exclude theology. A large library building would not hold all that has been written about the Bible alone. A small one might be filled with the printed material relating to Thomas à Kempis and his "Imitation of Christ." The "Poet at the Breakfast Table" supposed his neighbour to be an Entomologist, but the man of science was too modest to claim the title. Often spoken of as a Coleopterist, he was content to be a Scarabeeist. "If I can prove myself worthy of that name," he said, "my highest ambition will be more than satisfied." Every specialist knows how great his own subject is, how extensive its literature, how difficult, if not impossible, to bring together all the facts and speculations of those who have preceded him in the investigation of the little corner of chaos that he is striving to reduce to cosmic order.

If then the librarian could summon the Spirit of the Lamp to create the ideal library its main characteristic as a collection of books would be its universality. The ideal library may have stood in one of Eden's happy vales, and since then the children of Eve and especially those of them who are librarians or book lovers have sighed for this lost paradise of thought and knowledge. Certain it is that since the fall of man the *Bibliotheca Universalis* has never taken material form, and as the years widen the circle of knowledge it recedes further and further into the land of dreams and the speed at which it retires increases, so it would seem, with each new generation. The first edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" appeared in 1771 and filled three quarto volumes. In a century and a quarter the three increased to twenty-nine. It is a significant fact that this period wherein the boundaries of learning have been so widely enlarged is also the period in which libraries, great and small, have increased with marvellous rapidity. It used to be an article of undergraduate faith that the Bodleian contained a copy of

every printed book, but no library now, not even the largest, dare claim completeness in every direction, and huge specialist libraries have been created. But happily there is a constant stream of literature in which this specialist learning, in a condensed and quintessential form, finds its way to the general library.

The nearest approach to the ideal library is in the attempt to supply with generous liberality the literature of all lands and subjects to be seen in the great national collections provided mainly at the cost of the State, though often enriched by the munificence of individuals. The British Museum is the most familiar type of such an institution, and may probably, alike in extent and in freedom of access, claim the premier position. France might possibly in some respects challenge the claim, and other European nations are proud of their vast repositories of literary treasure. In the Library of Congress, America, though later in the race than some of her compeers, is with amazing energy, building up a great national library, and, happily unfettered by conventions, is working with skill and individuality that ensures success. But in the nature of things the newer institutions are at a disadvantage. No modern library can duplicate the treasures of the Vatican. Every great library rejoices in the possession of gems that are unique. Happily in these latter days the arts of exact and faithful reproduction have made it possible to have trustworthy facsimiles prepared. These simulacra can never have the interest of the originals, but they suffice for the purposes of scholarship, and they have a further value as a precaution against the loss to learning that would follow from the accidental destruction of the originals. It is much to be desired that all ancient MSS. of great importance should be fac-similed. In this direction we may commend the action of Italy in the magnificent publication of the MSS. of her mighty son, Leonardo da Vinci, who combined the talents of painter, poet, and engineer; whose well-stored mind seems to have

contained all the learning of his generation, and whose prescient genius anticipated, in part, some of the great ideas of later generations. There is another function of a national library. Their catalogues, so far as they are printed, should form a standard of excellence and be an important contribution not only to the bibliography of the nation to which they belong, but also to that universal catalogue which haunts the dreams of students and librarians who in our time have taken such mighty strides towards this unattained ideal.

When the first International Library Congress was held in London in 1877 I urged the printing of the British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books which then filled two thousand volumes of manuscript and was estimated to contain three million entries. There were, of course, many other advocates of the printing scheme, both earlier and later. The task was declared to be impossible of execution. Yet it has been accomplished. The British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books is the best bibliography of English literature and it is also the largest contribution that has ever been made to the Universal Catalogue. The publication of the British Museum Catalogue has facilitated research and has sensibly raised the standard of accuracy. In spite of the general opinion that every man and nearly every woman, is able to drive a dogcart, edit a newspaper, and make a catalogue, the accurate description of books is not an easy art to be learned without apprenticeship or effort. The youngest of the national libraries, if I may so style the Library of Congress, has made a novel and praiseworthy departure in the supply of printed catalogue title slips to other libraries. This is one of several examples of economy by co-operation.

The printed catalogue of the British Museum is, as I have said, a mighty contribution to the Universal Catalogue.\* Every library seems fully occupied with its

\* See Dr. Richard Garnett's paper in "The Library," Vol. v., p. 93.

own special work, but there awaits for some national library or international office the task, not indeed of completing, for in the nature of things it can never be complete, but of greatly advancing the preparation of the Universal Catalogue. This could be done by the simple process of reducing to cards the printed titles of the books in the British Museum, and of incorporating with them, as opportunity served, the "Catalogue of Scientific Papers," and such special bibliographical works as might be approved or be available. All these titles ought, in theory, to be editorially revised in accordance with a code of rules, and I know of none better than those of the British Museum which have the additional advantage of having served as the standard in the largest undertaking of the kind that the world has yet seen. And if absolute uniformity was not attained there would still be an immense advantage in the bringing together and arrangement of the multitude of references that could thus be made available for personal inspection or despatch through the post. What has been said refers to an alphabetical catalogue, but there are also many subject-entries awaiting consolidation. The labours of Poole and his continuators and imitators, British and Foreign, and the excellent "Subject Index" of Mr. G. K. Fortescue should here be named. The Institut International de Bibliographie announced that it had years ago in its possession six and a half million of bibliographical references and that it is daily adding to its store. Millionaires who desire to advance literature and learning might find a useful employment for their money and energies in the task of facilitating national efforts towards a general catalogue of all literature.

"If we think of it," says Carlyle, "all that a University, or final highest school can do for us, is still but what the first school began doing,—teach us to *read*. We learn to *read*, in various languages, in various sciences; we learn the alphabet and letters of all manner of Books. But the place

where we are to get knowledge, even theoretic knowledge, is the Books themselves ! It depends on what we read, after all manner of Professors have done their best for us. The true University of these days is a Collection of Books."

In this illuminating passage is the justification for insisting that universality is the true note of the library. No science can prosper without its aid. He who would add to the sum of knowledge must as a preliminary learn what is already known. He who devises what he hopes is a new invention must investigate, in fear and trembling, lest he has been anticipated. Even the mistakes of predecessors may be turned to account. The comparison of discordant views may suggest omitted considerations that will bring them into fruitful harmony. There is happily no finality in science.

Classification, even the most elaborate, useful and necessary as it is, can often only be approximate and that but in a rough and ready fashion. One book may serve several purposes and may be placed with equal propriety in more than one part of the library. Thus the celebrated "Lunar Hoax" of Richard Adams Locke which describes "wonderful"—and quite imaginary—discoveries in the Moon, has certainly no scientific value yet it is an interesting document in the history of astronomy as it shows the condition of education which caused its impossibilities to be greedily swallowed by multitudes both in Europe and America. The tract itself is an amusing piece of mystification, and it has a literary interest from the fact that Edgar Allan Poe noticed it in his "Literati" and institutes a comparison between its incidents and those in the story of "Hans Phaäl." Knowledge is not an island but a continent and however strictly defined the capital may be, each kingdom has vague borderlands where one science merges into another. Literature cannot be hemmed in by exclusive boundaries of nation or race. The arrogant Western world owes its most cherished book, the Bible, a volume of many books in one, to the East, to

the patriarchs and prophets of a race that lives only in exile from its fatherland—a race that wherever it may be, powerful or oppressed, wealthy or mendicant, turns in prayer to the Holy City that is the symbol of its faith and hope.

It used to be said that an educated man was one who knew something of everything and everything of something. With the ever-widening field of knowledge and observation it is impossible that a man should know even something of everything and even the most devoted specialist, however minute his speciality may be, finds difficulty in learning all that can be known of his subject. Thus arise opposite dangers of superficiality and narrowness. The Library whilst it should aid the researches of the specialist should also help him to take broad views and to see even his own special work in its right proportion and true relation to other studies. To see things not in sections but as a whole is not the easiest duty of the student, but it is real and essential. A great library impresses this thought on the mind. Are you an astronomer? Has it been yours to feel the awe and wonder when "a new planet swims into the ken"? Your science may have begun when Eve, on the night of the expulsion, saw shining above the lost Paradise a star of hope. Thousands of men have devoted their lives to your study since the days, thousands of years ago, of the shepherd star-gazers on the Babylonian plains. It has a rich and extensive literature, but in the greatest library its hall is but one of many. Dewey allows it but ten places out of a thousand in his "Decimal Classification."

So it is with every other department of learning. I do not know of a more remarkable bibliography than that contained in Dr. J. S. Billings's Catalogue of the Surgeon General's Library at Washington. Sixteen volumes of a first series, eleven of a second series—and more to follow—all filled with the titles of books and papers written on the healing art. Looking on this great effort we are as ready

as Socrates to pay tribute to *Æsculapius*. Yet Medicine, like Astronomy, is but one of the many departments of a great library. Universality is, as we have seen, an ideal impossible of realisation. Not the less is completeness the watchword for every library—a rational effort to provide the best that is possible under the environing circumstances. Every library, however small may aim at completeness in some direction, and every true microcosm is a contribution to the macrocosm. And the ideals of universality and completeness become nearer of fulfilment by that spirit of co-operation which is happily becoming more and more common amongst librarians and amongst the large and increasing class of persons who are engaged, to use the fine Smithsonian phrase, in “the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men.” Much has already been done but doubtless there are still many ways in which the relation of the library, the school, the university and the individual student may be improved. The possibilities of co-operation and serviceable help are practically illimitable. In the morning of life when the direction of the student’s energies are still undetermined the resort to a library with its inviting panorama of human learning will often give the impulse to fruitful endeavour. Reverence as well as the desire for knowledge is inspired in generous minds by the sight of a great collection of books.

Pope’s words have often been quoted:—

“A little learning is a dangerous thing,  
    Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.”

The doctrine if not a fallacy is a half-truth at the best. A little learning has some dangers but a little less learning has more and no learning is the most dangerous of all. And the wider our knowledge grows the keener will be our sense of the limits of acquirement, our eagerness to profit by the labours of the students who have gone before, and the true humility of our desire to add to the sum of human knowledge or at least to make straight some

part of the way for those who in the future shall enlarge the boundaries of learning.

The Library has relation to life as well as to learning. Books can aid us in acquiring the practical wisdom for the management of daily affairs, for the right relationship to our fellowmen. They can help us to moderation in prosperity, to humility in success, to courage in adversity, and to endurance and resignation in affliction.

“There is no God,” the foolish saith,  
But none, “There is no sorrow.”

How many sorrowing hearts have found consolation in the companionship of books! How tender are the accents of Plutarch striving to allay the grief of his wife for the death of their beloved daughter! How many have been strengthened by the words of those who have been dust and ashes for centuries, men who belonged to an empire that has past away, to a faith that has become extinct, to a race alien to our own, but whose message still lives and has power for consolation, for reproof and for inspiration. Literature can give us rest as well as inspiration; nor is it only the great ones who are of service to us in the work of life. There are moments when the melody of the milk-maid's song is a better tonic than the pealing grandeur of a great cathedral's organ. How well has Longfellow expressed this feeling when he asks for

      . . . . . some poem  
Some simple and heartfelt lay  
That shall soothe this restless feeling,  
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,  
Not from the bards sublime,  
Whose distant footsteps echo  
Through the corridors of Time.

For, like strains of martial music,  
Their mighty thoughts suggest  
Life's endless toil and endeavour  
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humble poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
As showers from the clouds of summer,  
Or tears from the eyelids start. . . .

Such songs have power to quiet  
The restless pulse of care,  
And come like the benediction  
That follows after prayer.

Wise indeed was the ancient Egyptian monarch who placed over the door of a library an inscription signifying that it contained "the medicine of the mind." From literature we may derive courage for the battle, fortitude in defeat, wisdom in victory and an anodyne for grief. What Shelley has said of the drama may well be given a wider application. "The highest moral purpose," he says, "aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching of the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind." This is what Arnold means when he describes culture as "a study of perfection." This it is at which our schools, and colleges, and universities, and libraries, all the machinery great and small of education, should aim. In proportion as this is attained are they successful and their existence justified. No educational system has fulfilled its purpose that does not nourish the love of knowledge and the desire of righteousness.

The Library has its lessons for nations as for individuals. It is a perpetual symbol of the brotherhood of man. It knows no distinction of Jew or Gentile, of bond or free, but welcomes genius from every quarter. The better part of Homer the Greek, Kalidasa the Hindoo, Dumas the French Mulatto, Shakspere the Englishman, Dante the Italian, Omar the Persian, Goethe the German, Tolstoy the Russian, stand on the shelves of the library to warn us against arrogating pre-eminence to our own people, and to

teach us that every nation may contribute to the common fund, and to lead us to hope that every race will bring some special gift for the common service of humanity. The American, newest born of time, with his self-reliant individuality, the ancient Greek, with his sense of beauty, the Roman, with his skill as law-giver, the Japanese, with his feeling for colour, the Negro, with his cheerful endurance, the Briton, with his power of association, the Hebrew, with his deep religious instinct, are familiar instances of special gifts and aptitudes. These are mirrored in the literature and history of the races of mankind as we may read them in the halls of a great library. Each race may have its own ideal—the French love equality, the English love liberty,—and the interaction of all these influences upon each other modifies the thought of the world and makes for the progress of mankind.

The duty of the library in relation to learning is, to garner with sedulous care all the fruits of knowledge, to record what is known, and to provide material from which future knowledge may be wrought. The mission of the library to the life of the individual is to place before him for his use and benefit all the knowledge and all the wisdom and all the inspiration that the ages have accumulated. The summons of Religion, the efforts of Philosophy, the warnings and incitements of the Moralist, the Historian's long record of endeavour, of failure, and of success, the varied wonders that the physical sciences have to reveal, the investigations of the geographer, the narratives of the traveller, the varied inventions of men for the comfort and ease of existence, the pictures of life drawn by the novelist and the dramatist, the melody of the poet's song—all these the library places before the individual for delight, for instruction, and for guidance. The library has also its international mission. Paul's declaration that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men" finds its realization in the library to which East

and West and North and South, the Old World and the New, have alike contributed all those things that they deem most precious and beautiful; the holiest and the wisest that they have been able to fashion and express. As Victor Hugo has told us the library is the symbol of

. . . . Truth,  
Knowledge and Duty, Virtue, Progress, Right,  
And Reason scattering hence delirious dreams.

### A BOY'S ROMANCE.

#### I.

This is the way;  
White roses and the new-mown hay—  
These are the fragrant guides that lead  
    My willing feet,  
By flowery brake and dew-besprinkled mead,  
    To where two tiny rivers meet,  
And wimple down together through the narrow glen;  
And there love in a cottage waits for me again.

#### II.

O fairest maid in all this mountain-land!  
—Nor fairer she than swift to teach—  
    Who taught me first to understand  
Two mysteries; for she in one same breath could set  
Before enraptured ears Love's subtle alphabet,  
And all the mystic beauties of the Cymric tongue,  
    Whether in household speech,  
        Or Bardic song;  
    For all the polysyllables uncouth—  
The Saxon's terror—from her rose-entinctured mouth  
    Like precious pearls would fall,  
        And with such liquid sequences did run,  
    That I, my double lesson once begun,  
Love, and love's language—bird-like calling and recall—  
Had grasped, long ere the blissful teaching was half  
done.

## JOHN TRAFFORD CLEGG.

By J. REDFEARN WILLIAMSON.

**A**N impression still lingers in the minds of those who do not care to ascertain the truth that dialect-speaking folk are invariably uncultivated and vulgar, and the people of Lancashire especially still suffer in reputation from much ill-informed criticism. Their forefathers have been described as "A gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles and Saxons capable of no grand combinations, lumbering about in pot-bellied equanimity, not dreaming of heroic toil and silence and endurance, such as leads to the high places of the universe, and to the golden mountain tops where dwell the spirits of the dawn." In 1838 William Howitt in 'Rural Life' writes of the district round Blackburn and Belthorn as one of the back settlements: the men and women as rough and harsh-featured, and the children as little savages, with a villainous and hangman look, to whom common English was unintelligible. To-day, when the County Palatine sends her enthusiastic thousands through the metropolis to a football final the London pressman picturesquely labels them the Northern horde, as who should say: the Goths have invaded Rome. So might a contemporary local Froissart have chronicled their aspect at Poictiers and Agincourt, and furnished Shakespeare with material for drawing a Lancashire Fluellen.

Remaining practically unchanged from the Heptarchy to Victoria, they were evidently long regarded as a species of semi-barbarians, but, as a passing comment, it is worth noting that, instead of dreaming of doing things, the descendants of the pot-bellied gluttons in later days, in

sympathy with the ideals of a sister nation across the Atlantic that was fighting for human emancipation, starved and struggled through four long and weary years of a cotton famine with an uncomplaining courage and sublime fortitude that won the admiration of the world.

Now these heroic virtues could not have been the growth of a day, and it follows that any authentic writings in the native Doric of a race displaying such qualities was bound to be of vital interest and value, not only to themselves, but to all lovers of good literature in whatever guise it appears. Yet only in the home of its birth can the significance of dialect literature be thoroughly understood and appreciated, like the flavour of a wine that will not bear transportation.

In the march of human progress a patois or dialect gains strength by isolation and aloofness, while a national language grows by contributions from a thousand sources. Once established, a folk-speech, like the veteran garrison of a fortress seldom recruited, grows more and more conservative. As the years pass time-worn words are no longer required for duty. One by one they drop out of the ranks: fail to answer the roll call, and silently disappear. The survivors, hardy and vigorous in spite of old age, still make a brave and gallant show on the parade ground; but when they adventure forth they find a changed world; they are poor relations visiting rich kinsfolk who will not receive them as equals. Like him

Who hath outstayed his welcome while,  
And tells the jest without the smile.

they find their sterling qualities ignored: their venerable appearance ridiculed: and their former services forgotten.

Many persons disparage dialect literature on the ground that anything worth saying can be better expressed in ordinary English. That a dialect is limited in scope is true; it would be idle to attempt an essay on the

Higher Criticism, or on a subtle psychological question, or to write a problem play or novel in the vernacular of Essex or Cornwall; but the essential things of human experience:—birth and death—pain and pleasure—love and hate—gain and loss—all the vicissitudes of humble life: these have been told in song and story over and over again with inimitable force and truth in the simple and unadorned speech of the countryside. How poor we should be without the lovely idylls of William Barnes in the soft, drawly Dorset dialect: Tennyson's worldly-wise Lincolnshire ballads: T. E. Brown's Manx yarns: Drummond's humorous poems of French-Canadian life, "The Habitant," and "Johnnie Courteau": or the work of numberless genuine singers since the days of Burns whose homely strains are warm with living fire.

Especially is this true of Lancashire literature. No other county in England can show such a garnered harvest of good writing, and a singular fact is that, wherever it is found, the great bulk has been gathered during the last fifty years.

As everyone knows, John Collier, the Lancashire Teniers, over a century and a half ago was the first to make the dialect popular. His rendering of the Northern variety of the Midland division of folk-speech was not pure, even for his time, as, living on the border, he allowed Yorkshire idioms to creep in; but though the Rabelaisian humour and cramped phonetic spelling of "Tim Bobbin" is now somewhat out of fashion, it should be remembered that as a pioneer and founder he had mainly to rely on his mother-wit and native shrewdness.

With the advent of the Wilsons, Waugh, Brierley and their contemporaries the dialect reached its palmy days. It burst into leaf and flower with astonishing quickness: "Dow" times ripened it: newspapers boomed it; Hamerton, Kay-Shuttleworth, Ainsworth, Mrs. Gaskell, Westall, Mrs. Banks, Miss Fothergill and many more used it in

their novels to get local colour and truth to nature. The comic spirit was still prominent, but in a chastened form, and fears began to be felt that, with higher views on education, the virile native speech would ere long be refined out of existence. And no one dreaded the prospect more than the subject of this essay. It haunted him like a spectre: it became an obsession, and when late in his short life he used his pen to avert the threatened doom, he did so in the conviction that he was fulfilling a sacred trust. In the preface to his first volume he says:—

This dialect is rapidly dying. In the last twenty years its very roots have been cut away. Soon mere scraps and relics of it will remain—fossils on a beach, broken melodies of old times heard in a dream. But such of us as were taught to think and speak in this unaffected and virile tongue cannot wholly forget its music while we live. If we use its terms no longer they are woven into the texture of our hearts, preserving for us thoughts of love, and youth, and hope; of happy years, and maybe years of sorrow too we would not lightly forget.

He was mistaken, but undoubtedly the idea was an incentive to his productive powers.

John Trafford Clegg was born in that Lancashire Mecca the village of Milnrow, in 1857, where his father was a small grocer, and where Collier spent most of his life: and his writings show that the atmosphere and associations of the place made a deep and lasting impression on his sensitive nature. On his family removing to Rochdale he was sent to the grammar school, and afterwards apprenticed as a printer to his brother. Later he went to work in a cotton mill bought by his father in Glossop: and in his leisure time studied music, both theory and practice, with such success that, on migrating back to Rochdale, he obtained the post of organist and choirmaster at St. Mary's Church. Returning to his old trade he became a foreman: got married, and settled down, devoting his

spare hours to versifying in ordinary English. Not, however, until a local schoolmaster stirred the waters by advocating the abolition of the native speech did he find out his true vocation. In the controversy that followed he contributed two letters in dialect to the *Observer*. These were so racy and full of whimsical humour that the editor was induced to invite more sketches from the same source. These duly followed, and, with a few poems and sonnets previously written, were collected in a paper-backed booklet entitled "Reaund Bi Th' Derby": a modest production of one hundred pages, published under the pseudonym of "Th' Owd Weighver." The title sketch, an account of a ramble round Blackstone Edge to the inevitable goal of a moorland inn, where the author and a poet of his own creating foregather and exchange ideas, is a slender narrative showing acute observation, and packed with mirth and pathos both natural and sincere. One poem named "Mi Feyther" ends with this pious prophecy:—

"For iv there is another lond, wheere looms were never  
geart,  
Wheere folk con rest in peace, an Want's thin ribs were  
never reart,  
They'n let yo in beaut chargin owt, an don yor fithers on,  
An't Maisther waint forget to say, 'Well done, my good  
owd mon !'  
For weel aw know, as sure and thrue as aw'm a livin lad,  
Above yon sky's wide-slantin broo there's nob'dy like my  
dad."

But the tiny book is mainly remarkable for two things: a small clear-cut gem, a bird fable or apologue for parents named "Th' Owd Gam," and the rendering of that detestable namby-pamby fantastic jargon, the Northern Mantilini-ism known to natives as "talkin' fine." As a satire on those who mince their speech because they are ashamed of the tongue they lisped in the cradle, it is admirably done, but, whether by accident or design, wherever in

these pages a character is intended to speak in current English, the refinement is sure to be over emphasised, with the result that frequently, after a paragraph of honest dialect, the English sounds jarringly vulgar. This feature is seen in all the subsequent stories where the two are alternately used, and many passages could be quoted showing that the author's pen walked on stilts when delineating people alien to his own transparent nature. As will be seen later he could and did write beautiful English—no other word will do—but only in dialect was he always in happiest mood, and his touch firm and true. "Th' Owd Gam," which, without repeating the refrain is given entire, would alone have established his reputation: and could have been written by none but a master of his craft;

TH' OWD GAM.

A cock-robin courted a little breawn hen ;  
Cheep ! Cheep ! Cheep !

They fluthert i' t' snowdrifts so cowd an' so clen ;  
Cheep ! Cheep ! Cheep !

They twithert and cuddl't fro mornin to neet,  
An' huchted up through t' dark in a crack eaut o' th' seet,  
To jump eaut wi th' sun again, wakken and breet.

Cheep ! Cheep ! Cheep !

One day coome another cock, pyerkin his bill,  
An' swore 'at for love t'other robin he'd kill,  
An' carry th' breawn hen off bi fair myens or feaw ;  
But th' husband were gam, an' soon punced him i' teaw ;  
"Hooray, lad!" his wife said, "tha's sattl't him neaw."

They twithert away whol Spring's carpet were spread,  
An things wakkent up 'at they'd long ta'en for dyead ;  
"Neaw, missis," said th' robin, "thee stop i' this chink,  
An' aw'll carry thee up thi cake-brade an' smodhrink,  
For it's getten hee time tha kept quiet, aw think."

So hoo ceawr't in her neest for a week an' a day,  
Or it met be for longer—aw connot just say ;  
An' then there were chirping enough i' that crack,  
An' moore oppen meauths nor t' poor fayther could pack,  
For he'd getten some childer o' gullet an' back.

So fayther an' mother i' yearnest set to,  
 An' soon fund 'em o' enough eightin to do;  
 Said th' robin, " Eh, bless 'em ! they're pratty and fawse ;  
 To keep 'em o' some tack or t'other we'll awse,  
 An' then they'll keep us, an' we'll watch 'em and sauce."

But he're cheted, for soon as their wings they could shift,  
 They scutthert away, some to th' reet, some to th' lift ;  
 So t' fayther broke th' heause up, an cobbed it on th' floor,  
 An he potthert abeaut a bit, scrattin his yure :  
 " Ah ! " he says, " it's th' owd gam ! aw'll go coortin no moore.  
 Cheep ! Cheep ! Cheep ! "

That is spontaneous as Chaucer : fresh as a May morning : and apposite as a proverb to a certain phase of Lancashire life. The remaining pieces in dialect are all good, and, in addition, the contents include the best worst pun ever perpetrated.

Encouraged by the reception of his first venture, he continued to contribute weekly sketches to the *Rochdale Observer*, and seriously thought of pursuing literature as a profession instead of a pastime. He worked at high pressure, with feverish activity, and under the continuous strain his health, never robust, began to give way. Gradually growing worse, and acting on advice, after much hesitation he went to live at Bournemouth. But wherever a man goes he takes himself with him, and the change of residence made no difference to his literary industry. His pen was never idle, and a further incentive was that having now no settled occupation he had to maintain a wife and young family on the proceeds of his mental labour. Bravely and cheerfully he faced the responsibilities of his position : heavy enough to a strong man : how much heavier to one whose physical strength was ebbing day by day, only those who have suffered a like experience can estimate or understand.

Bearing on his position and prospects at this time, and also as indicating the fine, sympathetic nature of the man, an extract from a letter received from him by me may

prove interesting. The letter was a reply to one of mine from Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight, after a stay in the Riviera:—

“I have been fixed here for twelvemonths’ health-seeking with poor success, having rather lost than gained on the whole. My wife catches lodgers when she can, and I am struggling to make literature pay—not a very hopeful task as you may suppose, although a little encouragement has come this month from Longmans Green and Co., who have accepted one of my novels. The steamers here begin to run at Easter, and if you remain in the island I will come over to see you. I trust your travelling in warm climates is not a sign that your own health is impaired or delicate.”

When that last paragraph was written he did not know I had been ill, but his quick mind raced to the conclusion that a brother Lancastrian’s wintering in the South could only arise from circumstances that called for an expression of his own friendly solicitude. The proposed meeting—to my life-long regret—was destined never to take place, and the next news I heard was that he had gone on the last lonely journey. He died at Bournemouth in his thirty-eighth year, passing away painlessly and peacefully, and conscious to the last moment.

The novel to which he refers, “David’s Loom,” is a story of Rochdale life in the early part of the nineteenth century: a tragic tale of an inventor—loom smashing—riots—revenge, and murder. The plot is well-conceived, dramatically wrought out: and the various incidents graphically described; but the sad, final page has the appearance of being written in the premonitory shadow of his own untimely end:—

“I have seen robust men shudder at the thought of death: while for me the grisly tyrant has no terrors. How comes that? Is it because my feeble grasp of life can more easily be loosed? Assuredly strong men discover no greater happiness in life than I have done; I would not change my infirmity, tolerably quiet conscience and reflective habit for

the paltry hopes, gross ideals, earth-bound visions, petty anxieties of many active fellow-creatures within my range of acquaintance. Thirty years of life have been granted to me. I am thankful, recognising well that I have really lived longer than some who attain twice my age: yet I could not desire that weary length of days to be repeated.

Of late my fragile powers have waned. Carefully as my dear ones endeavour to conceal their knowledge, I am satisfied that palpable symptoms of decay are apparent in my frame. The acute perception of which I have so often boasted cannot entirely delude me. In very few years at most, possibly within a period to be measured only by months, this transient body must fulfil its term on earth."

Shortly after his death " Stories, Sketches, and Rhymes in the Rochdale Dialect " appeared: a large volume containing, amongst many others, two prose pieces of exceptional importance: " James Leach," and " Sally Brella," and a poem in couplets " Deawn i' th' Shade," describing with photographic accuracy and brevity the various characters in a weaving shed, and concluding with this bit of philosophy:—

" We're o' alike! it's noane a bit o' use  
 Yo tellin me 'at brass con gild a goose,  
 Or to hee-breedin we should cringe an' squirm;  
 Sich talk as that con never carry berm.  
 Rich idleness mun bring consait, we know;  
 Hard-worchein poverty mun envy show;  
 But deep below that crust t' same nathur lies,  
 An' some day, happen, we may see it rise,  
 When things are on a level footin set  
 An' there's an end to us, an' th' world, an' th' fret."

" James Leach " is the life-story of the once well-known Wardle composer whose hymn-tunes attained a wide popularity in their day, and the writing of this model biography was, beyond doubt, a labour of love. The tale is told as a shining thread running through the warp and woof in the woven history of the hamlet on the moorside

over a hundred years ago. The varied scenes in the little community are like pictures in a tapestry where the hero is always present and never obtrusive. The humours of the village folk: the old band-leader and choir-master who begs James not to compose any more tunes because "its lowerin' to a conducthor": the courtings and merry-makings: the troubles with choir and band on practice nights when "Israel in Egypt" is in preparation: the episode of John Wesley coming to preach, and the impression he made, are all painted with easy skill, and serve as an animated background for the central figure whose career and pathetic early death are so admirably drawn. Between author and subject there are many points of striking resemblance; both were born in the same district: both were unassuming, and yet ardent in pursuit of ambitions partially achieved: both happily married, and both died—one by a scourge, the other by an accident, when only half the allotted span was run. Quotable passages are in profusion, but to be thoroughly appreciated the short piece should be read in its entirety. Nowhere else can the beauty and dignity of which the dialect is capable be so fully seen as in this unpretentious record, this prose-poem of one whose name and fame as a musician, long lingering in his native north, has now been revived and made a permanent possession.

"Sally Brella,"—Lancashire for Sarah Brierley—is an epitome of a typical operative family's struggles in a modern manufacturing town related with uncompromising veracity. Sally herself, the sharp-tongued, quick-tempered, soft-hearted mother, is introduced as a contrast to a certain Imogen, the heroine of a fashionable novel:—

"but what arta woth, Imogen at t' side ov owd Sally  
Brella?"

Aw felt that were a bit ov a sattler, for Sally's turn't fifty  
year owd, an' hoo's t' mother o' nine. It'd bother a novelist  
to get mony fine speeches eaut ov her meauth, for hoo's a  
dyel betther wortcher nor talker; an' iv he went axin her

opinion abeaut th' influence o' German thought i' metaphysics, or thried to read her some o' Breawnin's poems, he'd be moore likely nor not to get a rowlin pin cobbed at his yead. He'd be cheted iv he went seechin beauty in her, too. Sally cawn't show a meauthful o' pearls between ripe cherry lips: her teeth are as bad to find as gas-lamps in a Local Board district. There's no glittther in her e'en, noa-ther, they're rayther blear't, iv owt, wi o' t' dhree starin hoo's had to do. Her fingers are noane white and taperin; her foot taks a sizable clog to howd it; her yure doesn't goo ripplin deawn her back i' waves o' gowd. What bit hoo has left hoo tees up in a handkercher.

One more extract shows how cleverly Clegg could conjure up a vivid picture by a few simple negations:—

“ Iv ony refin't chap had put his yead into that heause he'd a bin sure ov a fit—aw myen that mak o' refinement 'at makes folk freeten't ov a creawd, teighches 'em to wear spring glasses whol their e'en are good, put scent upo' their handketchers, an' think silky Latin betther nor rough rowler-teawel Saxon; an iv ony woman—lady aw should say—used to sittin idle i' th' pahlour whol a servant did t' wark for her had sin Sally's style o' heausekeepin, hoo'd ha fainted straight off. Not 'at there were ony dirt, yo untherstand, for Sally olez kept things clen an' wholsome; it were like a want o' polish, a bare plainness abeaut pots an' furnithur, mixed wi sweet savvours o' reausty iron, wool oil, an' cotton sizin off t' childher's clooas, 'at 'd ha sicken't weel-bred folk. For one thing they'd no fancy brackets nor china plates hangin on th' woles, no piethur rail runnin reaund, no dado (nor dodo noa-ther), no piano, no umbrell stond i' th' lobby, an' no lobby for one to ston in, no bells, no wot wayther upstairs, no wine cellar, no stairs carpet, no muslin curtains, nor nowt. It's a capper heaw they shapped to live, but they did shap it some road, an' throve beside.

But there were tuthri things i' that heause 'at couldn't be hung upo' woles or set eaut on shelves. Love were one. Amos and Sally brought that into th' spot on their weddin day, an' it's theere yet, shinin breet wi reglar use. Thruth's lamp were theere, olez blazin, givin th' shadows o' lyin an' chetin no chance to gether. Honest independence grew wi

a thick stalk eaut o' th' harstone, spreadin healthy branches o' reaund ; every young Brella rear't undher t' shade o' that hardy evergreen would ha scorn't to beg or owe onybody a bodle, an' sanner ha dee'd nor gwone to th' warkheause. Charity lived wi' em, never wantin to flit; an' that were very like th' greight saycret on 'em agreein so weel wi theirsels 'an other folk, feelin satisfied wi what they had, an olez shappin some road to spare a thrifle when it were needed. But there were no refinement abeaut th' hole. Not a spoontle."

How Sally insults a supercilious parson : how she quarrels with a neighbour, and then nurses her through an illness : how her charity overflows : how she brings up her own family till they blossom into successful singers, painters, mill managers, and town-councillors' wives, and how the husband takes a secondary place as if so ordained by Providence, is all related with an enthusiasm that carries the reader along in unison. True to nature in every detail, though entirely imaginary in conception, the author's fancy touched and transformed an ordinary homely woman into a living reality of permanent attraction, and I think his heart must have danced with delight when he contemplated his handiwork and saw that it was good.

After a lapse of three years a second miscellaneous collection was issued, and though in many respects not equal to the first, the volume serves to exhibit Clegg's versatility in choice of subject and style of treatment. The bulk of the contents as before is provincial : but a dainty trifle, charming and fanciful, an episode in the life of Mozart called "A Minuet," shows that his mind was making excursions in other fields. Had this delicate tribute to the great composer been published without author's name, it might easily be ascribed to a writer more widely known. "Fair Content, a Fantasy" : a quaint conceit in Spenserian stanzas is another departure and experiment. In its surroundings it looks like a demure Quakeress in a circle of fervent revivalists. It has an old

world air reminiscent of Shenstone, but there is no trace of imitation, a weakness difficult to avoid in such a well-worn metre. There is also an unexpected essay on Scandinavian mythology named "Frost and Seald," full of the half-serious, half-humorous comments that distinguish most of Clegg's writings, combined with good-natured sarcastic asides. What can be better in its way than this rapid summary of the old Norseman?—

Scandinavia con show sich a length o' romantic chronicles as few counthries con brag on. They'n two big collections ov ancient gibberish co'd Eddas, one i' prose an' t'other i' poethry; ony quantity o' scaldic songs (shokin poor stuff they are, too); an' a lot o' sagas, or histhories, some thrue, some fanciful. Everything's on a big scale i' their owd histhories; no little potterin folk con be fund. They could eight like navvies when meight were handy, or clem a day or two iv they happen't to be busy; tak a week on't spree when thrade were slack, or make o'ertime at slaughterin', live like giants, an' dee beaut grumblin. They never larn't t' rule o' three, could noather read nor write, didnt shut theirselves up i' warm reawnms ten heaurs a day, nor make life a long gamblin do thryng heaw mony hawpnies they could scrat together afore they deed, so, otogther, they were a lost, ignorant lot, wi' nowt like cultivation or brains we han' neaw.

From this foray into the 'dark backward and abysm of time,' and speculations on the old Norse deities and vikings, the turning of the leaf brings us to scenes of modern life in the hills and valleys of the Pennine range, where some of the descendants of the sea-rovers still live and flourish, displaying the same manly virtues that distinguished their forefathers in ages past. Rambles in the country districts round Rochdale were always a favourite form of recreation with Clegg whenever he could escape from the printing-press, and in numerous records of holiday tramps over Blackstone Edge: through the Todmorden valley and Rossendale Forest: over the brown

and purple heathery moors: in cloughs and dingles made musical by wimpling mountain rills, and even by the side of the dirty, slushy Roche, he has the air, and gives you the feeling of a bird let loose from its cage: of a spirit set free from bondage. And in this mood all seasons were equally enjoyable to him. With a ready pencil he painted the scenes he loved, but in his pictures nature is always subsidiary to humanity, in contrast with the landscapes where figures are mere dots in a great stretch of canvas. "A Winter Jaunt": "Calder Valley": "As Far as Ashoth": "Blackpool Nowts": are good examples of his skill in making scenery duly subordinate to the human interest. "Across Derplay": a spring-day pilgrimage on the highlands between Bacup and Burnley with the noblest prospects in Lancashire for a background, is a sketch wherein his whimsical humour, sunny wisdom, keen observation and buoyant cheerfulness have full scope for display. With two companions he discourses wisely and wittily on holidays: on the Townleys of Townley: on the Fieldens of Todmorden: on Worsthorn and Edmund Spenser: on modern comic songs and nigger minstrels, and adds another splash of colour to the composition by introducing a troupe of travelling entertainers, while a note of pathos arising out of an accident to a child heightens the interest in a memorable afternoon's ramble.

There is also a graphic description in "Clogden Sing," of the anniversary sermons at a country chapel built on the spot where John Wesley once preached, "and so," continues Clegg, "this Chapel coome to be planted where his sthstraight-walkin' feet had stood, an' theere it is, a lastin' testimonial to a gradely Englishman an' a credit to English art; for it's a genuine wom-made design—four sthstraight lines an' a chimbley." The conductor's troubles with singers and instrumentalists at the rehearsals: the old scholars who come from far and near to the services: "beside o t' childer gooin to th' schoo neaw, wi o their relations to watch t' little things swaggerin' i' white frocks

an' new jackets": the mingled emotions of relatives who walk through the chapel yard where lie the graves of those once near and dear: and the excitement and success of the great day itself, are limned with a force and lifelike truth that every Lancashire reader at least will recognise and admire.

Altogether the two volumes contain a thousand pages of prose and poetry, and it is keeping well within bounds to say that there are not half-a-dozen dull ones amongst them.

The last story from the prolific brain, never finished by the author, and never published in book form, was "The Milnes of Whitacre": a romance of intrigue in the days of William III. The plot develops in the neighbourhood of Milnrow, with an interlude in the Low Countries. The story has much merit and promise, but also bears marks of haste and unrevision, and any criticism would be unfair that did not allow for the circumstances. One convention, quite permissible, and found in other writers is that, at a period when the Lancashire accent was at its broadest, the villagers are made to speak in Wardour Street English.

With this incomplete tale five long years of arduous literary labour ended, labour sweetened by recognition, and crowned with a success that placed Clegg in the front rank of dialect writers.

Overshadowed as a poet by Edwin Waugh, whose reputation rests on three or four short poems that won instant popularity and have since become classics, his own verse, in some instances, excels that of his forerunner; it reveals a livelier fancy, and a wider sweep of imagination combined with truth to nature, and felicity of word and phrase, as exhibited in "Deawn i th' Shade": and "At th' Far End": and the curious reader will search a long time before he meets with anything to match the grim humour of "Death an th' Philosopher." Had stern necessity not weaned him from the country muse, he might have been, like Jasmin, the Gascon dialect poet of Agen, the laureate

of his native county, and the preserver of the beloved folk-speech in imperishable song. This was his ambition, but time and fate willed it otherwise, and for plain prose he forsook the Lancashire Muse—a charming lass wearing clogs on her feet and a shawl over her head—but not before he had once more demonstrated that, in sterling qualities of mind and heart

As good stuff under flannel lies  
As under silken clothes.

His prose is racy and epigrammatic, bubbling over with boyish high spirits and vivacity: mingled with sparkling humour and touches of tenderest pathos. He sums a phase of character in a sentence; of one man he says “he has a memory that forgets nought but borrowed brass.” The famous Parson Threlkeld he epitomises in a paragraph: “This were a wondherful chap, ‘at could talk i’ nine languages, an’ knew o’ ‘at were or ever had bin. He were as good as a reference library, an’ cost a dyel less to keep.”

Fond of fun and jollity, he never stoops to buffoonery, or relies, as some dialect writers do, on topical allusions for effect. However homely the subject, he invariably treats it in a way that appeals to the universal heart of mankind. With insight and sympathy he uses his native Doric for highest purposes, and, after reading and re-reading authors widely known and obscure, and gratefully remembering their good work, the conviction remains that, as a painter of the life and manners in modern times of the blunt-spoken, independent, good-hearted Lancashire folk, John Trafford Clegg is the last and best. But finer than the literary perfection was the man himself. With a sanguine temperament and lovable disposition, he won the affection of all who knew him, and after a lapse of fifteen years his surviving friends still speak of him with rare and unstinted enthusiasm. What greater reward could any man desire?

The portrait prefixed to his first volume shows a face open as the day, transparent as the soul within; it is the countenance of a man incapable of anything mean or base, but who took the world as he found it, and tried to make it better.

Five years after his death the people of Rochdale erected a granite obelisk, within sight of "Tim Bobbin's" grave, to the memory of four writers associated with the district who used the dialect as a medium by which they could record the strength and weakness, the faults and virtues, the joys and sorrows of the sterling race they knew so well. It was my privilege to be present at the unveiling, and never shall I forget the scene when the name of the author of "Sally Brella" was mentioned for praise. A wave of thrilling emotion swept the audience from end to end, and the cheers again and again renewed from the assembled thousands told how near and dear John Trafford Clegg had become to his fellow townsmen.

And, after all, a man's noblest monument is the testimony of his own works.

## AN EXCURSION INTO CRICKET LITERATURE.

By J. A. H. CATTON.

**A**S a whole one must confess the poverty of the literature of the game which Lord Byron described as manly toil. We agree with the opinion expressed in *The Quarterly Review* of 1884 that the "*magnum opus* of cricket has yet to be written."

While there may be differences of opinion concerning the definition of literature it seems safe to take our stand by the side of Robert L. Stevenson and declare:—"There is, indeed, only one merit worth considering in a man of letters—that he should write well; and only one damning fault—that he should write ill." Whether a man writes ill or well is largely a matter of taste, and that being so, we shall adopt the arbitrary method of judging of the literature of cricket by what appeals to our taste. There may be differences of opinion. Then shall we shelter behind the contention that there cannot be any argument on a matter of taste.

Cricket is essentially the invention of the English mind, the pride of this country as a national pastime which has preserved a wonderful standard of science and purity, as a recreation which has not been spoiled by over legislation, and as an amusement which is not solely regarded as a means to either money or the lust of victory. People play cricket to refresh the mind and relax the body. There are people who bask in the sun like lizards, and watch others play. There are those who prefer to look on at everything. In 1833 a reverend gentleman, the Rev. John Mitford, of whom more anon, declared that "Cricket is the pride and privilege of the Englishman alone. Into

this, his noble and favourite amusement, no other people ever pretended to penetrate; a Frenchman or a German would not know which end of a bat they were to hold; and so fine, so scientific and so elaborate is the skill regarding it that only a small part of England have as yet acquired a knowledge of it."

The small part of England where this recreation of esoteric mysteries had been cradled and nursed is generally conceded to be Hampshire—although Surrey, Sussex, and even Kent have claims upon our consideration as localities where the game was played in early times, with a considerable degree of skill. Still we must award the palm to the village of Hambledon which produced a team that played all England. The Hambledon village club was probably founded about 1750, and ceased to exist about 1791. The power of the Hambledon men may be gathered from the fact that in ten years they gained 29 successes against the strongest elevens which all England could hurl against them.

The Hambledon club had its chronicler, its historian if such a word can be applied to a man who had a supreme contempt for dates and details. This chronicler and historian bears the immortal name of John Nyren who in this year of 1833, to which reference has already been made, published a little book, in green cloth, bearing on the cover the inscription:—"Nyren's Cricketers' Tutor 2s. 6d." This did not look alluring. The frontispiece was a drawing of some gentlemen playing cricket at Mary-le-bone, and Mr. G. S. Layard writing to *The Field* on January 28, 1905, declared that this illustration was by Robert Seymour who claimed to be the originator of the artistic realisation of Mr. Pickwick. The title page is elaborate. "The Young Cricketers' Tutor," it is stated, is by John Nyren—a player in the celebrated old Hambledon club to which is added "The Cricketers of my Time"—the whole collected and edited by Charles Cowden Clarke.

This tiny book of 126 pages is an incomparable volume. The author in his dedication styles it—"an insignificant book of instruction," but the laws of the game are lucidly explained and the whole theory and practice expounded in pure Anglo-Saxon. I cannot help noticing that Nyren never makes a reference to the captain of the team. In the days when Hambledon was the Attica of the art, the leader of the side was called the General and he was invariably the wicket-keeper who directed all the movements of the fieldsmen in perfect silence so as not to put the striker on his guard.

A well of English pure and undefiled sufficed for John Nyren and the literary cricket school he founded. We regret that the English language does not seem equal to the demands of some latter-day cricketer-journalists, and some journalist-cricketers.

Nyren entered his protest against the innovation of round arm bowling which he then described as "throwing." Mr. Ward, at one time M.P. for London, remarked as the Rev. James Pycroft in his "Oxford Memories," tells us: "Cricketers are a peaceable set of men, as you may judge by this—I never see bowling about which there might not be a wrangle." Nyren, having entered his protest, went about his business and described cricket as played at Hambledon—both the players, the scene on either Broad Halfpenny or Windmill Downs and the people who surrounded the arena. There are only fifty-three pages, and small pages, but every line is the facet of a gem. Says Mr. Charles Whibley, who edited a modern edition of this book:—"Once only have the man and the occasion met, and the result was John Nyren's 'Cricketers of my Time'; a fragment it is true, but a fragment incomparably brilliant and vivid." The cricketers of these latter days have turned their bats into pens and their leg guards into blotting pads—but not one of them has ever approached the intensity of the enthusiasm, the old world flavour, and the graceful English of

"The Cricketers of my Time." As E. V. Lucas has written, "It had no predecessor; it has had no successor. The only piece of writing that I can find worthy to place beside it is Hazlitt's description of Cavanagh, the fives player, which is full of gusto—the gusto that comes of admiration and love."

When the pedant of Hierocles desired to sell his house he carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen of the mansion. On this basis extracts must serve as specimens of this treasure of cricket in a golden age, when railway trains, half-penny newspapers and telephones had not sapped the joy of living.

John Nyren pays noble tribute to his father Richard Nyren. Both father and son were left-handed players and Richard Nyren was a provokingly deceitful bowler. Says the son of his sire:—

He was the chosen General of all the matches, ordering and directing the whole. In such esteem did the brotherhood (mark the phrase) hold his experience and judgment, that he was uniformly consulted on all questions of law or precedent; and I never knew an exception to be taken against his opinion, or his decision to be reversed. I never saw a finer specimen of the thoroughbred old English yeoman than Richard Nyren. He was a good face-to-face, unflinching, uncompromising, independent man. He placed a full and just value upon the station he held in society, and he maintained it without insolence or assumption. He could differ with a superior, without trenching upon his dignity, or losing his own. . . When Richard Nyren left Hambledon, the Club broke up, and never resumed from that day. The head and right arm were gone.

Is there not majesty in the severe simplicity of this prose? Could character be more clearly etched. "The head and right arm were gone." What a panegyric to the master mind and the guiding hand is there in seven monosyllables. 'Tis an epigrammatic poem of praise.

Now let us turn to John Small, the elder, a batsman of

the first magnitude. We are told by Nyren that he was "of honest expression and as active as a hare." There are two excellent stories of John Small the elder. Thus:

He was a good fiddler, and taught himself the double bass. The Duke of Dorset having been informed of his musical talent, sent him as a present a handsome violin, and paid the carriage. Small, like a true and simple hearted Englishman, returned the compliment, by sending his Grace two bats and balls, also paying the carriage. . .

Upon one occasion Small turned his Orphean accomplishments to good account.

Having to cross two or three fields on his way to a musical party, a vicious bull made at him; when our hero, with the characteristic coolness and presence of mind of a good cricketer, began playing upon his bass, to the admiration and perfect satisfaction of the mischievous beast.

This likes me well. Let us turn aside for a moment; let us digress to illuminate this phrase—"the characteristic coolness and presence of mind of a good cricketer." In 1900 a book entitled "The Walkers of Southgate"—seven bachelor brothers who all attained distinction as cricketers—was produced by Mr. W. A. Bettesworth and several collaborateurs. In these pages, Mr. Vyell E. Walker, the hero of so many bowling feats in the fifties and sixties, tells an excellent tale about Tom Lockyer, the wicket keeper, and Julius Cæsar—two great Surrey cricketers. These celebrities were playing in a match against a local twenty-two on a small ground, on the outskirts of which, and not very distant from the wicket, cocoanuts were set up for the spectators to throw at. Evening was approaching, it began to rain, and it looked as if the two last men of the twenty-two would play out time and save the match. One of them hit a ball just past Julius Cæsar at cover point. Cæsar ran after it with tremendous energy. "Now Julie," cried old Tom Lockyer at the wicket, "let us have it," upon which Julie failing to find the ball, picked up a cocoanut, threw it in

full toss to Lockyer, who whipping off the bails, pocketed the nut, and ran off to the pavilion and the match was won!" For coolness and presence of mind this narrative challenges John Small's story of the soothing effect of the double bass upon the breast of the savage bull.

Reverting to the pages of John Nyren, we are charmed by his description of Tom Sueter, the wicket-keeper. He says:—

What a handful of steel hearted soldiers is in an important pass, such was Tom in keeping the wicket.

. . . I have numberless times seen him stump a man out with Brett's tremendous bowling . . . He had an eye like an eagle—rapid and comprehensive . . . As if, too, Dame Nature, wished to shew at his birth a specimen of her prodigality she gave him so amiable a disposition, that he was the pet of the neighbourhood; so honourable a heart, that his word was never questioned by the gentlemen who associated with him; a voice which for sweetness, power, and purity of tone (a tenor) would, with proper cultivation have made him a handsome fortune. With what rapture have I hung upon his notes when he has given us a hunting song in the club room after the day's practice was over.

Truly these cricketers of Hambledon were men.

Nyren tells us about George Lear, "Little George," who as a long stop was as sure as a sandbank, of Lambert, "The Little Farmer," who while tending his father's sheep used to bowl away for hours together at a hurdle, of Lumpy Stevens the famous bowler, a most simple and amiable creature, who had no trick about him and was as plain as a pike-staff in all his dealings, of Noah Mann, who rode twenty miles every Tuesday to practice and of those anointed clod stumpers, Tom and Harry Walker. The picture of Tom Walker shows him to have been a remarkable man. He is described with alluring wealth of detail in this wise:—

Tom's hard, ungain, serag of mutton frame; wilted, apple-john face, his long spider legs, as thick at the ankles as at

the hips, and perfectly straight all the way down—for the embellishment of a calf in Tom's legs, Dame Nature had considered would be a wanton superfluity. Tom was the driest and most rigid-limbed chap I ever knew; his skin was like the rind of an oak, and as sapless. It was said of him that he was without blood and he had no nerves, that he was the Washington of cricketers, that he never spoke when batting, and he was so difficult to get out that he was nicknamed "old everlasting."

But there are two other wonderful men in this magnificent fragment to be acquainted with—William Beldham and David Harris.

Of William Beldham, described as the finest batter of his own or perhaps of any age, Nyren gives a vivid and glowing description. He tells us that he

was a close set, active man, standing about 5 ft. 8½ inches. He had light coloured hair, a fair complexion, and handsome as well as intelligent features. We used to call him "Silver Billy." No one within my recollection could stop a ball better, or make more brilliant hits all over the ground. Wherever the ball was bowled, there she was hit away, and in the most severe venomous style. Besides this, he was so remarkably safe a player; he was safer than the Bank, for no mortal ever thought of doubting Beldham's stability. . . He rapidly attained to the extraordinary accomplishment of being the finest player that appeared within the latitude of more than half a century. There can be no exception against his batting, or the severity of his hitting. He would get in at the balls and hit them away in a gallant style; yet, in this single feat, I think I have known him excelled; but when he could cut them at the point of the bat, he was in his glory; and upon my life, their speed was as the speed of thought. One of the most beautiful sights that can be imagined, and which could have delighted an artist was to see him make himself up to hit a ball. It was the beau ideal of grace, animation and concentrated energy.

Having thus discanted on Beldham, Nyren turns to David Harris—the very best bowler, a bowler who,

between anyone and himself comparison must fail. Says our author:—

David Harris was by trade a potter. He was a muscular bony man standing about 5 ft. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. His features were not regularly handsome, but a remarkably kind and gentle expression amply compensated the defect of mere linear beauty. The fair qualities of his heart shone through his honest face, and I can call to mind no worthier, or in the active sense of the word, not a more "good man" than David Harris. He was one of the rare species that link man to man in bonds of fellowship by good works; that inspire confidence, and prevent the structure of society from becoming disjointed, and "as it were a bowering wall, or a tottering fence." He was a man of so strict, and such high honour, that I believe his moral character was never impeached. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to convey in writing an accurate idea of the grand effect of Harris' bowling; they only who have played against him can fully appreciate it. His attitude when preparing for his run previously to delivering the ball, would have made a beautiful study for the sculptor. Phidias would certainly have taken him for a model.

Now, in those distant days it was the custom, I think the excellent custom, for the bowlers to choose and pitch the wickets. Nyren tells us that Harris would not only pitch a good wicket for himself but he would also consider those who had to bowl with him. On the morning of a match he would rise at six and take infinite pains to select the ground. Our author pertinently adds:—

The most eminent men in every walk of life have at all times been the most painstaking; slabberdash work and indifference may accompany genius, and it does so too frequently; such geniuses, however, throw away more than half their chance. There are more brilliant talents in this world than people give the world credit for; and that their lustre does not exhibit to the best advantage commonly depends upon the owners of them. Ill luck, and the preference that frequently attends industrious mediocrity, are the

only anodynes that wounded self-love, or indolence can administer to misapplied or unused ability. In his walk Harris was a man of genius, and he let slip no opportunity to maintain his pre-eminence.

These passages prove Nyren's contention that the cricketers of Hambledon were men who possessed qualifications above the common level and that they were renowned for their high personal character.

Not only have we these strongly etched portraits of the heroes who preceded W. G. Grace—there were great men before Agamemnon—but we can see in these pages the Hampshire folks, the spectators gathered on Broad-Halfpenny during one of their grand matches. We can see the multitude in a dense circle round the noble green. There they stood in their smocks, leaning on their staves, and sport-loving rustics as they were baying hard in broad Hampshire, and encouraging the Hambledonians, although they never forgot the fair play due to their opponents. Patiently and anxiously they watched every turn of fate in the game, as if the event had been the meeting of two armies to decide their liberty. Says Nyren :—

Little Hambledon, pitted against all England, was a proud thought for the Hampshire men. Defeat was glory in such a struggle. Victory, indeed, made us only a little lower than the angels. How those brawn-faced fellows of farmers would drink to our success! And then, what stuff they had to drink! Punch! Not your new Ponche à la Romaine, or Ponche à la Groseille, or your modern cat-lap milk punch—punch be-deviled; but good, unsophisticated John Bull stuff—stark!—that would stand on end—punch that would make a cat speak!—Sixpence a bottle! We had not sixty millions of interest to pay in those days. The ale, too!—not the modern horror under the same name (1833 remember), that drives as many men melancholy mad as the hypocrites do;—not the beastliness of these days, that will make a fellow's inside like a shaking bog—and as rotten; but barleycorn, such as would put the souls of three butchers

into one weaver. Ale that would flare like turpentine--genuine Boniface (this immortal viand, for it was more than liquor) was vended at twopence per pint. . . How strongly are all those scenes, of fifty years by-gone, painted in my memory!—and the smell of that ale comes upon me as freshly as the new mayflowers.

Such is glorious Nyren, and as we close the book and think of this eulogy of old ale, we may well recall Thomas Hardy's description of the strong beer of Casterbridge in "The Trumpet-Major."

A few years ago Mr. E. V. Lucas, who has recently written "The Hambledon Men," gave the world a short story entitled "The Pavilion Cat." This humorous *jeu d'esprit* concerned the pavilion cat at Lord's, and the creature discoursed of Ranjitsinhji and Jack Hearne until asked:—

"How did you come to have this gift of speech?" "Oh, that was quite simple" said the cat. "I've been sipping some of the Broad-Halfpenny Punch." "The Broad-Halfpenny Punch?" "Yes; haven't you read Nyren?" the cat replied. "Don't you recollect where he says of the Broad-Halfpenny Punch that it could make a cat speak?" "Yes," I said, "I remember it; a magnificent passage." "Well," continued the cat "I've been drinking some. An old fellow brought a basket to the match yesterday—an old-fashioned Hampshire yeoman—and he scratched my head—just behind the ears, where it's so soothing, and gave me a slice of beef and a sip at his bottle. We had a most interesting conversation after that.

Finally, before we leave Nyren and his panegyrics on beer it is well to recall what the Rev. James Pycroft in his famous book "The Cricket Field," says of the "immortal viand":—

But how remarkable that cricket is not naturalised in Ireland! The fact is very striking that it follows the course rather of ale than of whiskey. . . The mountain mists and

mountain dew suit better with deer-stalking than with cricket; our game despairs the Dutch courage of ardent spirits. The brain must glow with Nature's fire, and not depend upon a spirit lamp.

Living at Folkestone to-day is Miss Mary Nyren, the granddaughter of John Nyren. She has told Mr. E. V. Lucas that there is no doubt that John Nyren wrote this book, Cowden Clarke only being the Editor. But here we join issue with this lady. The word editor has often a liberal and wide interpretation. There is good warranty for saying that neither Nyren nor Clarke ever wrote with such simple elegance and such glowing enthusiasm as in this book. Nyren talked and Clarke, inspired by this ancient cricketer, composed this Homeric volume. Mrs. Cowden Clarke in "*My Long Life*" says that Nyren "in his advanced age used to come and communicate his cricketing experiences to Charles with chuckling pride and complacent reminiscence."

John Nyren never wrote a word of this book, Nyren simply borrowed the pen of Charles Cowden Clarke, the author, musician, and lecturer, the friend of Keats, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt, Shelley, Hazlitt, Mendelssohn, Douglas Jerrold, Macready, and Charles Dickens. Charles Cowden Clarke, as we know, married Mary Victoria Novello, the eldest daughter of Vincent Novello—the gracious lady who spent sixteen years in preparing the *Shakespeare Concordance*. Now Charles Cowden Clarke calls Nyren the "amiable Father" of the little work. He was so in this way. Nyren, who was fond of flowers, music, and pictures, used to visit the Clarkes at their cottage, Craven Hill, Bayswater, and he rarely did so without a blossom, or the manuscript copy of an air which had given him pleasure. Nyren was a violinist and a composer who used to teach the gipsies tunes so that they, in gratitude, did not pay nocturnal visits to his hen-roosts. Nyren produced unconnected scraps concerning cricket, and con-

versed freely of his old playmates. Charles Cowden Clarke transferred these reminiscent talks to paper, and they were published in *The Examiner*—a weekly periodical, afterwards collected and republished, forming in my opinion, the great classic of cricket, comparable only to Walton's "Complete Angler."

Nyren evidently had the faculty of interesting Clarke. You remember the famous politician, who referring to the works of "The Druid"—who wrote with such garrulous charm on sport and agriculture—said: "Wonderful man—the Druid. He can even make you feel interested in pigs." That was Nyren's gift—he made Clarke interested in the old cricketers he had never seen. Listen to what Clarke said of Nyren:—

A more single and gentle hearted, and yet thoroughly manly man I never knew; one more forbearing towards the failings of others; most unobtrusively steady in his own principles; more cheerfully pious; more free from cant and humbug of every description. He possessed an instinctive admiration for everything good and tasteful, both in Nature and Art. . . Mr. Nyren was a remarkably well-grown man, standing nearly six feet, of large proportions throughout, big-boned, strong and active. He had a bald bullet-head, a prominent forehead, small features, and little deeply-sunken eyes. His smile was as sincere as an infant's. If there were any deception in him, Nature herself was to blame in giving him those insignificant shrouded eyes. They made no show of observation, but they were perfect ministers to their master. . . He had not a spark of envy, and, like all men of real talent, he always spoke in terms of honest admiration of the merits of others.

I love John Nyren because of the inspiration which he gave to Clarke. The words were the classic simplicity of Clarke, but the thoughts came from the generous mind of Nyren. We may say of Nyren as Robert Louis Stevenson said of Samuel Pepys, "he observed the lives, the speech, and the manner of his fellow-men with prose fidelity of detail,

and yet a lingering glamour of romance." We admire Nyren for that he was always looking for the good qualities in his heroes. To him they had not feet of clay. He is the Herodotus of cricket and has left us a prose epic with an old-world aroma unlike that of any other book on sport.

Let us mark the effect of this little book. It was reviewed in *The Gentleman's Magazine* by the Rev. John Mitford—a gentleman whom Charles Lamb spoke of as "a pleasant layman spoiled." At Oxford he was the friend of Reginald Heber, and later in life enjoyed the most perfect intimacy with Samuel Rogers, the poet. Mr. Mitford—who was "Sylvanus Urban"—was the rector of Benhall in Suffolk. In early life he was a cricketer and never lost his love for the pastime. He supported William Fennex, an old professional, whom he employed as a gardener. Mr. Mitford and Fennex used to sit o' winter nights with a pint of Geneva gin, a jug of hot water, and a snuff box on the table, while an old bat lay on the sofa. Until the morning star appeared they discussed their beloved science—cricket. A great scholar, Mitford in 1833 began to contribute to *The Gentleman's Magazine*. In January, 1834, he became the editor, and for seventeen years his charming essays appeared with the regularity of the dawn of each month! One of his first articles was a review of Nyren's "Cricket Tutor"—and the review was a eulogistic fantasia. In this article Mitford described "Beldham" whom he visited when an old man:—

Stop, reader, and look if thou art a cricketer, with reverence and awe on that venerable and aged form! These are the remains of the once great, glorious, and unrivalled William Beldham, called for love and respect, and for his flaxen locks and his fair complexion—Silver Billy. . . . Never was such a player! so safe, so brilliant, so quick, so circumspect; so able in counsel, so active in the field, in deliberation so judicious, in execution so tremendous. It mattered not

to him who bowled, fast or slow, high or low, straight or bias, away flew the ball from his bat, like an eagle on the wing. It was a study for Phidias to see Beldham rise to strike; the grandeur of the attitude, the settled composure of the look, the piercing lightning of the eye, the rapid glance of the bat were electrical. Men's hearts throbbed within them, their cheeks turned pale and red. Michael Angelo should have painted him. Beldham was great in every hit, but his peculiar glory was the cut. Here he stood with no man beside him, the laurel was all his own, it was like the cut of a racket. His wrist seemed to turn on springs of finest steel. He took the ball, as Burke the House of Commons, between wind and water; not a moment too soon or too late. Beldham still survives. He lives near Farnham; and in his kitchen, black with age, but like himself still untouched with worms hangs the trophy of his victories; the delight of his youth, the exercise of his manhood, and the glory of his age—His Bat, Reader! believe me when I tell you I trembled when I touched it; it seemed an act of profaneness, of violation. I pressed it to my lips and returned it to its sanctuary.

It is interesting to know that "Silver Billy" lived to the almost patriarchal age of 96. Indeed when 92, he was wont to be at work in his garden before eight o'clock in the morning. Even then he did not stoop and he did not require a walking stick. The last link connecting the Hambledon club with modern cricket, he died in 1862. Twice married he was the father of twenty-eight children by his first wife and eleven by his second. The sketch of William Beldham in Lillywhite's "Scores and Biographies" pertinently closes with the remark: "Take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again."

The Rev. John Mitford's review is marked by most perfervid eloquence. For instance, he declares, that a good cricketer like a good orator must be an honest man, but what are orators compared with men of cricket? There have been a hundred thousand orators but there never was but one David Harris. Many men can make good speeches, but few can deliver a good ball. In his

peroration Mr. Mitford rises to still more sublime sentiments in this strain:—

Farewell, ye smiling fields of Hambledon and Windmill Hill. Farewell ye thymy pastures of our beloved Hampshire, and farewell ye spirits of the brave, who still hover over the fields of your inheritance. Great and illustrious eleven! fare ye well! In these fleeting pages at least your names shall be enrolled. What would life be deprived of the recollection of you? Troy has fallen and Thebes is a ruin. The pride of Athens has decayed and Rome has crumbled in the dust. The philosophy of Bacon is wearing out and the victories of Marlborough have been overshadowed by fresher laurels. All is vanity but cricket; all is sinking in oblivion but you. Greatest of all elevens, fare ye well!

After such an ecstasy as this can we wonder at the lofty scorn which Mr. Mitford expresses for most of the cricketers of his own day. He suggests that some were more designed to stand for the stumps than hold a bat. Still he seems infatuated with a Rev. Mr. Knatchbull as he naïvely remarks: "We hope and trust that his professional engagement in Norfolk will never detain the reverend gentleman from the classic ground of Marylebone. A curate can supply his place in church but who is to supply it in the field? . . . He ought to have the living of St. John's Wood when he could play and preach alternately. Could it not be obtained?" This scholarly critic, who evidently thought more of cricket than of the cure of souls, judging by his scorn of men who neglected cricket for the duties of life, so assimilated the spirit of Nyren and the knowledge of the veteran William Fennex, that he compiled a manuscript volume which he gave to another clergyman the Rev. James Pycroft in 1836, and on this Pycroft laid the structure of his work "The Cricket Field," which was published in 1851 after sixteen years of research. Where is the original? No one knows. Still we have "The Cricket Field" and this to me is only second in charm of style and anecdotal power to Nyren.

The Rev. James Pycroft, an old Oxford Blue writes with love of cricket because, he argues, that in this world there are no such happy plains of innocence as our playing fields. Invoking the genius of our mother tongue and discarding the laws of dynamics and the principles of physics, Mr. Pycroft gave to the world a book which can be devoured with zest and advantage even to this day. We are constrained to think that the style of Pycroft in this and in his later volumes "Cricketana" and "Oxford Memories" induced Mr. Fred Gale and Mr. R. A. Fitzgerald to model their books "Echoes from old Playing Fields," "Jerks in from Short Leg," and "Wickets in the West" in the same style. But Nyren's tiny tome accomplished more than all this as it does not require any effort of the imagination to believe that "Frederick Lillywhite's Cricket Scores and Biographies" were suggested by "The Cricketers of My Time." The first volume of this gigantic work came out in 1862 and there are now fourteen published—the whole embodying 10,000 pages. This work is a colossal and monumental thesauros and apart from the scores of matches from 1746 to 1878, contains a wealth of information concerning cricket, unequalled in any other book in the world. Maybe "Scores and Biographies" cannot be described as literature. Still its pages are graced by some poems of merit and essays of power, while the biographies of the cricketers are models of plain English, and might with advantage be studied by those who desire to write in precis with a crystalline clearness of expression. A complete set of "Scores and Biographies" is comparatively rare. There is always difficulty in obtaining the first four volumes. Mr. F. P. Miller, a former captain of Surrey, was financially interested in these earlier volumes, and he was so annoyed at the apathy of the public, who did not purchase, that he burned thousands of proof sheets before they were bound up. This leviathan ledger of cricketers, was eventually taken up by the M.C.C., but the Club was

entirely indebted to the late Mr. Arthur Haygarth, one of their members, who spent sixty years of his life compiling the whole of those fourteen volumes. In his private letters Mr. Haygarth bemoaned the lack of practical sympathy and help on the part of the M.C.C. in his tremendous task. Nothing but his amazing industry, the kindness of his disposition and his self-sacrifice—for he died poor—could have produced these fourteen volumes. All honour to his memory.

In one brief essay it is impossible to examine the Badminton Book on Cricket, Ranjitsinhji's work on the game, Daft's "Kings of Cricket," and Knight's "Complete Cricketer," or to refer to novels like Snaith's "King Willow" and Hutchinson's "Peter Steele." Some of the chapters in "The Walkers of Southgate," written by Mr. W. A. Bettesworth, seem pregnant with that pleasantly personal strain which permeates Nyren. Commenting on one match between the Past and Present of Cambridge University, we are told that a Mr. Sale did not accept a catch offered by Mr. F. H. Norman who made 112—nearly all of them after his escape. As a penance for his fault—and this was in 1859—Mr. Sale played for the rest of the match without shoes or socks—a barefoot penance which was increased by a blow from a ball on the foot. The brothers Walker were men of the Nyrenic character, if not of their period. The conduct of two of the brothers under most provoking circumstances, proves this to the hilt. The last ball of an over had been delivered when Alfred Walker stooped to get some sawdust. The batsman moved out of his crease, and Vyall Walker from mid-off threw at the wicket. The ball just missed the stumps and continued its course until brought up by the bridge of Alfred Walker's nose as he was getting sawdust. Mr. Alfred Walker, so far from displaying irritation, merely said that he ought not to have stooped down until "over" had been called. I. D. Walker was in the habit of running up the wicket after delivering

a ball. Once when bowling for Middlesex to Mr. F. Burbidge, who was batting for Surrey, he followed up the ball a long way. At the same time Mr. Burbidge ran out to hit with the result that when the hit—a very hard one—was made batsman and bowler were within a few yards of each other, and the ball hit Mr. Walker on the body before he could place his hands in position. Dr. Jones, we are told ran out of the Pavilion, and although "I.D." was greatly hurt he explained to the medical gentleman that "the ball had struck him very severely in the region of the pericardium." His fondness for rhetoric did not desert him even in most excruciating agony.

It is regrettable that in latter-day writing upon cricket we have not the anecdotal style, with all its old world charm, and that we do not keep to a well of English pure and undefiled. Listen to this:—

Genius is a better thing than style, and genius consists not in keeping rules, but in breaking them. You may very correctly and gracefully play a ball straight to mid-off and not get a run; how much better to hit it over mid-on's head for four, and if you can get a middle stump ball well to square leg over the spectators your triumph is complete. You have bothered the field, exasperated the bowler, alarmed the wicket-keeper, exhilarated the somnolent umpire, and accomplished two of the great ends of life—you have put yourself in a good, easy, complacent temper, and you have spoiled the tempers of most of the people near you. What more can a man desire?

That is a specimen of the work in *Bailey's Magazine* of 1871. Can we produce the like in these days of slang vocabularies and cheap criticism?

From 1754 down to the present hour, cricket has produced its poets, minor poets; most of them very much minor. Occasionally cricket does touch the higher plains of life, presents passion and varied emotions, shows us the beauty of Nature, and of the human form, and yet the game has not poetry like that of the chase. For about

thirty-five years W. G. Grace excited the poetic frenzy and the versifying gifts of those who engage in hero-worship. Passing over all the epics descriptive of great matches in the olden time, I pause for a moment over some virile verses on "The Death of Alfred Mynn" by W. J. Prowse, whose last stanza is noble in its sentiment:

With his tall and stately presence, with his nobly moulded  
form  
His broad hand was ever open, his brave heart was ever  
warm;  
All were proud of him, all loved him. As the changing seasons  
pass,  
As our hero lies asleeping underneath the Kentish grass,  
Proudly, sadly, we will name him—to forget him were a sin,  
Lightly lie the turf upon thee, kind and manly Alfred Mynn.

The selection of verse relating to cricket in "The Poetry of Sport" by Hedley Peek, and also in the "Songs and Ballads of Sport and Pastime" edited by W. W. Tomlinson seems very inadequate. Norman Gale is generally regarded as the laureate of cricket, but he writes the poetry of the passive cricketer while E. V. Luces has the literary facility combined with the Tyrtæan fire. Thus writes Mr. Lucas of a bat:—

Willow and cane is all I am, with a wisp of waxen thread,  
Cane and willow, willow and cane, fondly, perfectly wed;  
But never wood for a bounding yacht was picked with a nicer  
thought,  
And nothing planned by human hand ever was deftlier  
wrought.

Willow and cane is all I am, yet here is a wondrous thing;  
Willow and cane is all I am, yet also am I a King!  
The flowers of the earth my subjects are, and the throne of the  
cricket bat,  
Is English muscle and English youth, and who has a throne  
like that?

Willow and cane is all I am, yet look at the host I sway  
 And never a boy but smiles with joy as he grips me in the  
 fray.

A level mead is all I need, that is my royal hall,  
 A level mead and a gentle breeze, and the great sun over all.

The last few words remind me of "The Song of the Ball" with such a refrain as this:—

Pour on us torrents of light, good Sun,  
 Shine in the hearts of my cricketers, shine;  
 Fill them with gladness and might, good Sun,  
 Touch them with glory, O brother of mine,  
 Brother of mine  
 Brother of mine!  
 We are the lords of them, brother and mate  
 I but a little ball, thou such a great!

Dean Lefroy, Andrew Lang, and others of our time have written poems on this noble game, but perhaps the best example of modern culture of this kind comes from the pen of Mr. Alfred H. J. Cochrane, the old Oxford Blue, who wrote "The Kestrel's Nest and Other Poems." His "Ballade of the Corner Stroke" reads thus:—

I vow he shall not sleep beyond the grave;  
 The Acherontian cliffs shall hear his wail,  
 What time he roameth by the Stygian wave,  
 And Charon trimmeth not for him the sail;  
 By far the vilest in the moral scale,  
 Lonely beneath the dark Cimmerian pall  
 He shall go wander, weary, gaunt, and pale—  
 This is the man who snicketh the length-ball.

It was my best; no better one I crave  
 To bowl; it hurtled like an autumn gale,  
 And yet, withal, a crafty twist I gave,  
 Sufficing, as I fancied, to prevail.  
 When as I looked his exodus to hail,  
 Expectant to behold his timbers fall,  
 It went for four hard by his inner bail—  
 This is the man who snicketh the length-ball.

He smiled, and questioned if it were a shave,  
Whereat I yearned in dungeon or in gaol  
To prison him for years and years, the knave;  
Yet merely trusting that his heart would quail,  
I bowled at treble pace, without avail,  
For fiends appeared to aid him at his call;  
And he edged fourers till the feat grew stale—  
This is the man who snicketh the length-ball.

## ENVY.

Sirs, I was taken off; expletives fail;  
He never used the weapon's face at all;  
They bowled him with an under like a snail—  
This is the man who snicketh the length-ball.

So much for the literature of England's national game,  
and the effect of John Nyren's masterpiece on later  
generations.

## ROTHENBURG—AN IMPRESSION OF THE PICTURESQUE.

By J. J. RICHARDSON.

THE prosperous Nuremberg, the dead cities of Flanders, sleepy old Bruges, are familiar to many people as towns remarkable for their quaint, picturesque beauty to whom the Bavarian town of Rothenburg is unknown. Yet in many ways the charms of little Rothenburg surpass those of the larger mediæval towns, for the place is undeniably more unique in the completeness and style of its architecture, and in the beauty of its situation.

A most enthusiastic native writer upon Rothenburg, after enlarging upon its beauties, has sought to define the characteristics of the town with that philosophic, and scientific precision we nowadays expect from the Germans. And he does it in these words, which, in English, are not unlike a definition taken from Herbert Spencer's "First Principles."

"An unpremeditated grouping together of artistic motives, brought about through the intimate union of the aspect of the town, which has existed for centuries and remained free from all modern influence and additions, with the rural beauty of the surroundings."

There is no intention on my part to comment on this calm and reasoned judgment, to which I can only assent. My purpose is to offer you a few impressions made upon me during a recent visit to this fascinating town.

It was shortly before ten o'clock on a bright summer's morning that a friend and I arrived, after a twenty-one hours' journey, at the little junction of Steinach on the railway line that runs from Frankfort-on-the-Main to Munich. Our destination being Rothenburg we had to change here from the main line train into a small local

train that leisurely traversed the few miles of branch line which terminates at Rothenburg; for the old town lies quietly removed from the current of industrialism, of manufactures, and of commerce that is spreading itself over Germany as it has already done over so much of our own country, fertilising it with wealth, crowding it with people, and supplying social and economic problems of which no one living can foresee what their solution will be. Unrest, change, progress, decay are in the air, and we cannot escape from them. The danger is that we may become obsessed by the many riddles that the Sphinx of modern civilisation is propounding. But in Rothenburg all is apparently peace and quietitude. Decay has seemingly been arrested, change has been successfully resisted. We are no longer in the twentieth century. We can almost imagine that the years have been rolled back, and that we stand in mediæval times.

But I am anticipating events, for we have not yet reached Rothenburg. When we made the necessary change of carriages at Steinach we found ourselves among a party of about a dozen of both sexes whom it was evident, from the style of their attire, and established beyond all possibility of doubt by their language, had come from America. They were in excellent spirits, and by no means ill pleased with themselves. They did not seem to be sorry that they were away from the hustle and stress of their own country, and were undeniably interested in what they saw, and had seen, of an older civilisation. From their high pitched voices it could be gleaned without any difficulty, to put it mildly, that they had been to see the passion play at Ober-Ammergau, and had not been profoundly impressed by it, and now, like ourselves, were looking forward to a glimpse of Rothenburg.

One of the party who sat opposite to us ventured to remark, in a pleasant affable manner, "You come from England." We did not deny the soft impeachment, neither did we indulge in so unnecessary a reply as to

assert that he came from America. Even Sherlock Holmes might have discovered that from his personal appearance, to say nothing of the amount of auriferous wealth which he displayed when he opened his mouth. He was a heavily built, middle-aged man with a clean shaven, square jawed face, and a large straight mouth, and reminded me of the familiar portraits of the first President of the United States. But there the likeness ended, for his eyes, with their little creases at the sides, were full of a genial humour. George Washington was beyond all question a man of very great parts, but I do not think that an excess of humour has been claimed as one of his qualities. Is it not on record that he never told a lie in his life, not even as a boy when in trouble about that most dangerous, and notorious of all the fruits of the earth—the apple?

From the conversation of our acquaintance as we journeyed to Rothenburg it seemed as if his idea of what was truth approximated more to that of the late Mark Twain than to the more severe standard of George Washington. Possibly for that reason his conversation was the more enjoyable. His next assertion was that we were going to Rothenburg. This, as a mere statement of fact, was quite unnecessary, however helpful as a means of continuing a conversation, for the train only went to that place. He said that they had heard in America of the wonderful charms of Rothenburg, and we admitted having similar information in England, and expressed a hope that we should not be disappointed at what we were about to see. To this he at once replied that there was a train away in a couple of hours which, even to a globe trotting American, is not a long time to spend in a town when you are sight seeing.

Our minds being thus at rest upon immediate and important matters our conversation rapidly drifted into what was most apparent to the casual visitor to Germany —its enormous progress, the rapid growth of towns, the

evidences of accumulated wealth,—then to the possibilities of a German invasion of England, and the probabilities of America coming to the aid of the old country. On what America could and would do our acquaintance was a cheery optimist. But if the inhabitants of a comparatively new, and a remarkably successful, country cannot be optimistic there must be something wrong with them. But with those who belong to a country that has a splendid history of a thousand years behind it, and a position of supremacy that has not been challenged for over a century, it is, perhaps, not unreasonable, or contrary to human nature—in the light of what has happened to Egypt, to Greece, to Carthage, and to Rome—if they have spasms of doubt, and moods of pessimism. Like all other discussions this was never finished. It was cut short by the arrival of the train at Rothenburg, where we found ourselves in contact with what was real, with what could be examined, and a definite and satisfactory opinion pronounced upon. The curiosity that my friend and I felt as to what the Americans thought of Rothenburg was doomed to remain unsatisfied, for we never saw them again.

The natural situation of Rothenburg is a fine one. The original builders of it neither knew nor cared anything about town-planning, but they had an eye for a good position. The town, like the holy city of Jerusalem, is set upon a hill, and at the foot of this hill winds the little river Tauber. The walls of the town cling to the hill side encircling the houses with their protection. From the top of the wall on the inside projects a wooden roof, and underneath this there is plenty of room to walk, and by means of narrow slits in the deep masonry, you get glimpses of the fertile valley below. The walls at the present time extend more than three-fourths of the way round the town and are broken by six outer and three inner arches or gateways, and these are usually surmounted by a tower. Each of these towers has its

different and distinct characteristics. It is with them as it is with the houses in the town, no two are alike. There is similarity but not monotony. Almost in the centre of the town stand the Gothic Church of Saint James, and the Town Hall, with its high pitched roof full of windows, strangely bizarre in its effect. The original Rauthaus was destroyed in 1572, and then the present Renaissance structure erected. From the spacious, sloping square in front of it the main streets, forming a cross, run each to an outer arch or gateway. The streets are narrow, and the houses having high pitched roofs, and overhanging upper storeys, accentuate this want of width. The roadways are paved with cobble stones and at their sides the green moss finds undisturbed habitation, for there is now no press of traffic in these streets, no busy or excited crowds, as in the days long ago when the old town was the recurrent centre of sieges and fights, and its burgesses fell first under the sway of one, and then of another, marauding noble or prince.

Like most men who are given to fighting these burgesses were also prone to lavish eating and drinking, and of their hospitality it is recorded that, when in 1546, Charles V. was entertained by them, this monarch was so appreciative of the good things they had provided that he was detained in Rothenburg for nine days by a fit of gout.

In thinking of Rothenburg there easily comes into the mind the more famous mediæval town of Nuremberg. They are only some fifty miles apart, and they have many characteristics in common. In some respects Nuremberg is the superior. It has finer pieces of architecture, it has treasures of art, in paint and in metal, it has artistic associations,—think of Albrecht Durer, and the cobbler poet Hans Sachs,—and it has played a more important part in the history of the country. To such glories Rothenburg can lay no claim. But around Nuremberg is the restless spirit of change. It is a business town as

well as a mediæval city. It has tramways and many other modern conveniences to disturb its quiet. It has fine shops and pushing shopkeepers, and beyond its walls are to be seen the chimney stacks of its factories and workshops.

From all such innovations Rothenburg is free. It has the calm peacefulness of a town untouched by modern commerce, unspoilt by so-called improvements. It bears upon it the stamp of completeness, its days of transition are over. It is a finished work of art, and in this quality of repose lies its greatest charm. It impresses one with the restfulness of serene old age.

Rothenburg has sown its wild oats. It has had its youthful days when riot and turmoil and strife filled its narrow streets. Through many centuries it has played its part in the making of history, but what has happened within its walls makes no appeal to us, does nothing to heighten the spell that the old town has cast over us.

We may learn that in the tenth century Rothenburg was the centre of the celebrated Peasants' War, but the fact leaves us cold. What the local guide book calls "the zenith of its prosperity was attained in the fourteenth century under the famous burgomaster, Heinrich Topler, but we care nothing for this, though we are sorry to read that in the changing fate of the town the worthy Burgomaster died of starvation in a dungeon beneath the town-hall. We are told that in the twelfth century Barbarossa lived in and ruled the town, but what is Barbarossa to us, or we to Barbarossa.

No. The appeal that Rothenburg makes to us is quite apart from all the accidents and events of its chequered municipal life, or of the rôle it has played in the drama of German nationality. This appeal has nothing to do with historic memories, literary associations, or antiquarian possessions. It is visual, vivid, instantaneous. The moment we enter its gates we are conscious of the old town's charm—the inexplicable charm of the picturesque.

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